Plebeians And Patricians

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PLEBEIANS AND PATRICIANS.

CHAPTER I.

THE PLEBEIANS IN LONDON—WESTMINSTER ABBEY—ST. PAUL'S.

"Stones and mortar."
Grave-digger.

None of our public buildings have so many claims to the regard of the antiquary, the historian, the poet, the painter, the enthusiast or the architect, as Westminster Abbey—there are about it a multitude of existing realities, calculated alike to awaken and gratify curiosity, and to call into play many of the higher emotions of the human heart. The dust of the noble by birth, and of the still higher order of nobility—that of intellect and worth, rests within its precincts, and we know of no better school of morals than its epitaphs and monuments—and of no sterner teacher than the memories linked with them. To the thinking mind, indeed, the floor and walls of Westminster Abbey are as a book written within and without, but to the many led there by idle curiosity its inspection is the mere gazing at a reliquè, without the feeling and enthusiasm of a devotee.

"He that hath light wit[redacted]is own clear breast,
May sit in the centre and enjoy bright day;
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun,
Himself in his own dungeon."

The Manfords had not the "inward light," and their visit to the Abbey did not afford them any particular gratification. They were especially shocked to find such great people buried in a flat place—not near so comfortable, they declared, as "Shawton Chapel Yard."—Then again the ladies were ashamed at the sight of the marble figures."

"Bless me!" said one, "only just look there, a man without clothes, good lord! what impudence."

"Aye," said another, "it makes me blush, and there see, three women—what figures to be sure, they're not a bit like one's self.

"No, that they're not,—however could any body be taken that way—it's abominable."

"Oh dear!" said the countess, "it's very cold and chilling, I'd rather by half be shopping; its enough to frighten one to be among sc many dead people, with their figures stuck up against the wall all over white, just like so many ghosts, I would not walk here at night for a world of money."

"Good Lord, Helen! thee quite frightens one,—do let us go," said the mother, "I canna think, what in the world folks make such a fuss about Westminster Abbey for, it's mighty dismal."

At this moment they were passing through the gloomy porch leading to Henry the Seventh's chapel. If any sight can stir the human heart it is entering this magnificent chapel, when a flood of light is shed upon its various decorations;—the contrast, from the almost awful darkness of the entrance, to the dazzling brilliance of the interior, is difficult, nay impossible to describe. It pro-

duced some effect upon the primitive manufacturers,—as Mrs. Manford said—

"Well, now, this looks comfortable like;—do let us rest a bit—good lorjus! who's buried in this fine place?"

William, the footman, who acted as cicerone, informed her, that a grand king, called Henry the seventh, and his queen, were underneath the tombstone. This called the educated young ladies into play, "as surely," remarked the uneducated seniors, "their schooling must ha' taught them something of a king who had built such a grand place, only for to be buried in." A lengthened, but by no means accurate detail was accordingly given by the juniors, who constantly appealed to William as to the accuracy of their historical *data*, Mrs. Manford choosing to doubt the whole affair; roundly asserting, that to talk about "red roses," and "white roses," was sheer nonsense.

"Because," she sagely reasoned, "red roses and white roses are nothing but flowers; we ha hundreds of 'em in our shrubbery, and kings and queens are men and women, only you see they wear crowns, and every body is under 'em; and what has roses to do with men and women I should like to know?"

"Oh, you see, mother, you don't know any thing about it. We were taught it all at Mrs. Marshall's; and I very well remember reading, that in this very chapel the "red and white roses" were buried,—arn't they William?"

"Yes, ma'am—most certainly," answered William.

"Aye, well," said her mother, "that may be—but then it was only a kind of a nickname—just as we call Jem Dobs, 'Old Leather.' Now isn't that the way of it, William?"

"Yes, ma'am, most certainly."

"Oh, well, I dare say it was," said one of the juniors, "as I recollect one king was nicknamed Long-shanks."

"That's a good one, however; only to think of a king being called Long-shanks," said Mrs. Manford, laughing; "that will just do for a nickname for the count's cousin,—for such a pair of long spindles for legs I never saw."

"Yes, he looks for all the world like a man's body on a pair of stilts; I'm sometimes afraid they'll crack in two, when he's capering about," rejoined another.

The ladies were now got upon an endless topic with the sex—the personal peculiarities of their male acquaintances. Thus gossipping, they left the kings, heroes, poets and statesmen of the Abbey behind them. The Hall of Rufus was still less amusing; Mrs. Manford merely remarking, as the houses of parliament were pointed out to her—

"That it was her notion, that Sir John Manford would be a parliament man yet, before he died."

A long drive, brought them to St. Paul's. This promised better, the magnificent dome of Wren was sublime enough to extract, even the poetical exclamation from Mrs. Manford, of—

"Good gracious me! it's like looking into heaven!"

The curiosities, too, were more in her way;—the whispering-gallery,—the spiral stair-case—and, above all, the bell and the clock fingers.

"Oh," said one of the young ladies, "how nice it would be to have a sweetheart, to whisper to, all round this immense gallery. It would be so curious."

"I don't know that—for my part I'd rather have my whispering closer at hand. What would be the use of a man at that distance, and how foolish he would look talking to a wall."

"William, who had, we suppose, read the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, or seen Shakspeare's drollery on the stage, here broke in, with—

"Yes ma'am, very foolish—just like Pyramus and Thisbe."

"Pyramus and Thisbe," shouted Mrs. Manford, "who was they?"

"Oh, mother, never mind; you don't know any thing about Pyramus and Thisbe, they were two lovers, that used to talk through a crack in the wall, as they could not get nearer each other."

"Well, that was a funny way of courting to be sure. When I was a lass. we used to court through hedges, and under hay-stacks, and, may be, now and then, got a bit of a frolic, snug and comfortable like, after the old folks were gone to bed. That's the sort of courting for me, and none of your whispering round a place like this, or through a cracked wall. Marry-come-up, a pretty sort of courting that is, to be sure!"

"Lord, how shocking vulgar that must have been!—only to think of courting under hay-stacks, and talking through hedges. Why didn't you court in the drawing-room, or green-house, or amongst the shrubs, or in the carriage, the same as we do?"

"Why, the sees, Sally, there was no such a thing as those, then, and, I can tell thee, it's the nicest and most comfortable way after all. Me and our Thomas have had a hundred bouts at courting, on the old cut hay-stack, that used to stand, twenty years since, just in th' place where th' lodge is now."

Thus discoursing, they were shown the geometrical stair-case.

"Well, it's for all the world like a great big cork-screw;—but what is it for—do folks go up and down it? I'm sure I should get quite dizzy.

Only just think if one should happen to tumble off the top step, what a bag of broken bones one should be, to be sure."

It would be endless, however, to record the sayings of the party, the reflections and considerations arising from the inspection of one of the most stupendous productions of genius and science. The —mounting to the second gallery was a sore task, and tried Mrs. Manford's strength of limb severely. More than one pause ensued, and many an uncouth ejaculation startled the echoes of the dome.

"It's no use," at last she said, when arrived at about the gloomiest part of the ascent, "I canna get a step further. The breath's all gone out of my body, and my legs are coming off. I can't go up nor down without something to drink."

In this dilemma, no choice remained but to seat themselves in the dark, and to despatch William, post-haste, for a bottle of gin and a wine glass. During his absence, the repose of the party was disturbed by the descent of two young gentlemen, who had been performing the hare-brained feat of getting into the ball. These worthies, on finding a "nest of women," congregated like swallows—

"up above the world so high,"

thought the opportunity was not amiss for a little amusement: accordingly they commenced a very vigorous attack upon the position, amidst a profusion of compliments, some not of the most refined quality.

It happened, however, that the darkness of the place rendered the choice of particular objects out of the question; and the most outrageous of the two commenced operations upon the portly person of Mrs. Manford.

"Come, come, my lad, just go thy ways, will

thee; we are na such things as thee thinks—so 'bounce buckram,' or may be it will be worse for thee. We're none of your London Misses, wi' arms like skewers, and hands like bits of dough, as ye'll may be find soon. We're honest women —and so let us a-bee."

"Bravo, Ned," cried the fellow, to his companion, "a set of country dowdies, who would have thought of springing such game here. Have at them, my boy!"

"Thee wilt—wilt a—— Have at thee then!" and straightway the amorous hero received a prodigious kick in the stomach, that put him completely *hors de combat*, by rolling him head over heels down the steps, at which catastrophe, his companion, who had had any thing but a pleasant rencontre, with one of the juniors, made a precipitate retreat, leaving the indignant and insulted fair ones full of "sound and fury."

William, who had met the discomfited heroes below, looking wofully dolorous, now came up with the much needed restorative, and after a copious draught and a little more rest, during which Mrs. Manford declared "that she felt gin warming her heart," it was unanimously agreed to descend forthwith.

"It was a mighty place, certainly, and had some things well worth seeing, but it was twenty times too large, and there was no such a thing as getting through it, without being fairly killed."

The steps of St. Paul's reverse the classical lines, "facile descensus averni," &c., for it is comparatively easy to get up, but the coming down again, when previously tired, is indeed a task. The weight of the body being thrown, step after step, upon the inferior extremities, is a species of dismemberment, so that long before Mrs. Manford, who was weighty, and whose muscles, tendons

and ligaments, had lost the elasticity of youth, had reached the pavement, she sat down and wept bitterly; this burst seemed to relieve her, and a second restorative draught and the aid of William's shoulder and her daughter's, brought her, most wofully fatigued, to the bottom of the apparently interminable steps.

"I'll never go up there again," she exclaimed, "and them as does is great fools for their pains."

And so they wended their way westward, where another train of evils was awaiting them.

CHAPTER II.

DOMESTIC DISAGREEMENT.

"Have not wives affection?"
Shakspeare.

It has lately been hinted that Count Hartmann had exhibited symptoms of backsliding since he arrived in London. He was no longer the home-sitter that we have seen in Factory Fall, where food was wanting to stimulate his peculiar moral idiosyncrasy. The fact is, that he was a man utterly devoid of the higher and nobler attributes of our common nature—woman was to him, a creature of sense merely, and property was valued only as it ministered to his animal wants—home was not to him a temple, wherein to worship in sanctity and purity, and to develope those gentle and soothing emotions, which ever attend the votary at the shrine of marriage, when the head and the heart are properly regulated—no, he lived for himself, and the painful fact was now to be made apparent to his wife.

The countess had indeed long felt, that there was little or no sympathy between herself and her husband—still as no overt act of wrong had been committed towards her, she treated him as became a wife, custom is very powerful with women in these respects, and the show of affection and regard will continue for years, in cases where the foundations of love have been sapped and destroyed, but that it should be so, the husband must

neither be an open profligate, nor an avowed scoundrel.

When the fatigued party returned from St. Paul's, they found an assemblage in Baker Street, enjoying themselves after a somewhat extravagant fashion. The ladies were informed that dinner had been over some time, and at once retired to dress, and get a family meal of their own. This being done they descended to the drawing-room, from whence obstreperous bursts of laughter were proceeding, and in which, on entering, they found two splendidly dressed women, with the count and two of his foreign friends.

"Ah, mine dear wife, and her family," exclaimed the husband, "here be some very good friends of mine, whom I do pray you to know," and he severally introduced them, with names almost as sounding as those which confounded the understandings of the Vicar of Wakefield's unsophisticated daughters. The strangers, indeed, seemed to be quite at ease, and immediately placed themselves on the most familiar footing with the somewhat abashed rustics, nor less so the gentlemen. The countess was especially honoured by the attention of Mons. Diedamer, and a younger sister was pounced upon by a remarkably handsome looking man, calling himself Mr. James Adolphus Hoskiss, whilst the females of the set laughed and chatted, and a merrier party one might have travelled far before one had found.

The hearts of the Manfords, expanded under the general influence of the joyous moments, all but the countess, who had a certain undefinable presentiment of evil, that had clouded her brow, and prevented her entering freely into the spirit of the scene. The compliments, and extravagant praises of Mons. Diedamer, fell heavily upon her ear, and she could not avoid seeing that

her husband was fast becoming intoxicated. This, as a matter of frequent occurrence, would have excited little uneasiness, it was a vice she had witnessed in her own immediate circle from childhood, so that it was looked upon, rather as a troublesome habit, than as a thing to be reprobated and avoided as a crime. But she saw more than this, saw, or fancied she saw, a degree of intimacy between the count and the nominal sister of Mons. Deidamer, quite inconsistent with mere friendly professions. Not only did she witness this, but she felt persuaded in her own mind, that *Monsieur le frere*, was acting as a blind, to hide from her observation what was was going on before her. This conviction was farther strengthened, when he very urgently entreated her to favour them with some music, nay, by gentle violence actually placed her before the piano, and accompanied her music, with his fine *soprano* voice.

Helen, now Countess Hartmann, had been to some extent coarsely educated, as it has been already said. The honour of chastity, is a principle deeply implanted in the female heart, and the violation of the marriage vow is one of the rarest crimes, in the domestic history of English women. Hence arises the fact, that English wives are more nicely jealous of any deviation from propriety on the part of their husbands, than the sex in other countries. Their own high standard of fidelity is naturally and properly applied to the conduct of the man. "Da mihi testimonium mutuum," is their motto and generally speaking the sanctity of marriage is strictly preserved amongst us. Helen, although she had seen and heard much, that was sufficiently gross, and which would have shocked persons of more refined habits, had not on that account lost one iota of her sexual dignity; her feminine sensibilities, had, perhaps been blunted, but not de-

stroyed; and as her husband in his deepening intoxication, lost sight more and more of the presence in which he was placed, her uneasiness amounted to misery. Her sense of good breeding was powerful enough to restrain her very natural impulses, and she sat for a considerable time a martyr to her outraged feelings.

Mrs. Manford and her daughters, and nieces, treated the count's conduct, as a most excellent jest, and looked upon it, as resulting from his maudling humour—till, at length, Helen wearied and angered, beyond patience, rose to retire, a hint so intelligible that even Mademoiselle Deidamer, felt compelled to understand it.

This young lady, a lively, rattling, handsome, French-woman, now placed herself beside the countess, but adulation failed in softening or removing suspicion—so that she witnessed the departure of these unwelcome visitors, with infinite gladness. A remonstrance to the count followed not perhaps wisely timed.

"What mine wife—not to have one little play with Julie, la jolie et la belle—Ah—mind word, but she is very charmante, full of the game and sport, one nice, sweet girl."

"Well, but Ernest, is it not most abominable, to me, to your wife—to go on so before my face?"

"Well, well—mine wife. I will then do mine sports behind your back.—C'est egal à moi."

"Shameful!—Oh shameless man, I won't endure it, I won't," said Helen losing temper at the tone of cold indifference in which Hartmann answered her, between the whiffs of his meerschaum.

"Do not put yourself into one passions, mine wife," and he began singing—

"Ah Julie, est charmante
Riant, larmoyent

Julie est charmante,
Ma petite belle."

"Oh, you bad man," sobbed Helen. "I'll have nothing more to do with you, go to yõur Julie—if you are so fond of her."

"Very well, mine wife—I do think that it be more pleasure, to see 'la belle Julie' than to hear, in the night, one lecture of the curtain—I will have one drop more of the good brandy and then I will go."

"Oh Ernest, do stop," said his wife, "as she saw him very deliberately sip his brandy, replenish his pipe, put on his hat—and in not a very steady pace, prepare to leave the house.

The count, however, chose to be in "one great passion," swore loudly, in a barbarous *patois*—brought the whole household about him, and finally uttering a fierce denunciation against wives in general, "and against his own in particular" he left the house. A scene of bickering followed, ill calculated to allay Helen's disturbed passions—she accused her friends of siding with the bad man, and they asserted, that she had foolishly driven an intoxicated husband into the streets, where it was little likely, any good thing could happen to him. Angry word was added to angry word, till one of those quarrels happened, which so generally separate married children from their homes and parents—and Mrs. Manford, in a paroxysm of rage, declared she would not sleep another night under the count's roof.

CHAPTER III.

FARTHER DESAGREMENS.

"Was this right—to leave her?"
Shakspeare.

There appears to be a sort of fatality about marriage, in breaking up homesteads.—It does not signify whether son or daughter enters into the "holy state of matrimony," the same result almost invariably happens—a severance from the paternal hearth. It is true that this severance may not be complete, that intercourse with the home of our youth may still be maintained—but upon how different a footing to what it was before becoming the master or mistress of a household. Hardly one family holds together by the common link of domestic love, and although we may "honour our father and mother," we honour them not as in pupilage and childhood. New cares, new currents of feeling, new modes of life, and a gradual concentration of affection, progressively shut up the avenues of parental control and influence; and thus it is, probably, that the separation must be accounted for. Parents are slow in discovering the fact, that their children are as wise and as capable of action as themselves; and not only so, but they forget that their children are, to some extent, the inhabitants of a different world to that in which they have become habituated. Children also, on their part forget this; they move abroad in society, their manners change, and they wonder that they differ

with their parents. The difference is natural in both cases, but its effects should be counteracted by affection and gratitude on the one hand, and by reflection and forbearance on the other.

Mrs. Manford, on the following morning, was still in high dudgeon, and Helen quite as full of vexation and grief. The younger branches were anxious for a reconciliation, as they viewed this abridgment of their visit to London as a grievous hardship. The countess, on her part, felt that it would even be a relief to be alone. The conduct of Hartmann had filled her with apprehension, not shared by her friends; and, with a greater degree of delicacy and sensibility than might have been expected from her, she felt unwilling that her husband's return, and her subsequent experiences, should be witnessed by a third party. She therefore made no objection to her mother's immediate departure, and listened in silence to her angry and most unjust expressions.

"Well, Nelly, thee'll see—thoul't be glad to come back to Manford House I've a notion.—London indeed! who'd live in London? I wish myself well out of it, for my part. As for the count and his grand friends, may be we shall see if they turn out any thing good. Thee thinks I've no right to domineer over thee, and tell thee how to behave;—well, let's see how thee'll go on, when I'm away. I've a notion thee'll soon be wanting some sort of help, but we shall lend thee none—thee's had thy share,—and more than thy share—and so we shall see how thee'll go on." And thus, during the early part of the day, quarrel after quarrel, till the door was fairly closed behind them, and they were gone in good earnest.

Helen's courage had been sustained by her anger, and by the violent pique that had so suddenly deprived her of the company of those who had

been her advisers and companions through life. But she was now alone, and by a revulsion of feeling, she deplored the absence of her mother and sisters; she had no consolation in the expected coming of her husband, she could not throw herself upon him as the depository of her affections, nor derive support from the conviction that, although he might leave her, though wealth and friends might depart from her, she had still the sheet anchor of her hopes firmly grounded, in the love and cordial kindness of her natural protector. Her position too, independently of this grand want, was any thing but comfortable,—she did not feel at home, she did not feel herself qualified to rule with propriety over her household, strangers as they were all to her, in manners and in habits. Thus unhappy in her external relations, the repentant girl could only seek aid in the philosophy of endurance, with which woman has been bountifully furnished.

Meanwhile the count had been enjoying himself with great complacency, at the house of his friend Mons. Deidamer. Mons. was the ci devant proprietor of a respectable gambling house, where, by the aid of his beautiful companion, and a consummate address on his own part, he made money from the follies and the weaknesses of men, of all ranks; the count had known him formerly, and his house was the first haunt he sought after on his arrival in town; Deidamer received him civilly, but they became sworn friends on the development of Hartmann's resources, and the lovely Julie employed all her *artifices d'amour* either to win his heart or his purse. The count's hard and unfeeling mind, in which selfishness and cunning were predominant attributes, entered freely into Deidamer's views, and night after night he was a close sitter at the *rouge et noir* table. For his

wife, his affections, if he possessed any, (and we are willing to believe that no man is quite without them), had never been roused; he had married *money*, and this he did reverence and adore, and availed himself to the utmost of the pleasures arising from its use. Thus situated, Mademoiselle Deidamer had little difficulty in insinuating herself into the good graces of the count, and no arts were spared to share the spoils won by him from the hoards of the manufacturers; the flaming account he gave them of the quarters, from which his lucky "windfall" had come, made them charitably unscrupulous, because, as they argued, if they should fleece him of what he had now, there was plenty more for the asking for.

In such comfortable and congenial quarters, it is not wonderful that the count was slow in returning to his house—indeed, it is doubtful, whether he would have done so when he did, had it not been for the remonstrances of Julie and Deidamer, the latter of whom conceived it not unlikely that a "golden goose," as he expressed himself, might fall to his share from among the visitors of the countess.

CHAPTER IV.

——— "a villain,
And singular in his art."

Cymbeline.

It was not left for the slow hand of time to prepare to smooth the way to the evil lot of Helen. Trials endured prepare the mind for deeper suffering, the cicatrized heart being less sensible than the unwounded one. Hitherto her life had had few clouds in its horizon, but now and at once, when transplanted from her native home, the worst misfortune that can befall woman pressed upon her.

She had sat waiting in feverish anxiety for her husband's return during a considerable part of the day, and when at length his voice fell upon her ear, she was ready to receive him with a degree of warmth, to which she had been lately a stranger—for she had experienced, during the few hours since the departure of her friends, that feeling of solitariness which comes over the spirit when suddenly deprived of its customary companionship. In this state Hartmann would have been embraced and welcomed, and with a little attention the chances were, that by being thus thrown together, they might have accommodated themselves to each other, and have been comfortable—for, hitherto, Helen had lived rather with her friends than with her husband.

"Where be mine wife and her famille?" was the count's first query on entering the house.

"They have left for the country, sir, and the countess is in her own room."

"Left for the countré—diable and d—n! left for the countré, and not take mine wife," and, so saying, he stalked into Helen's room.

"Where be your famille? I do want your famille. You are one bad woman to rob me of your famille," said he to the shrinking girl, grinning through his mustachios like a trapped rat, and stamping in anger.

"Oh Ernest! for goodness' sake, don't look and speak so. They have left London,—do let us go after them, I am weary of this place."

"Ah, mine wife!—so they have left you all alone, have they—ver' well—it is good!" and he departed, closing the door after him.

Now commenced Helen's troubles, she had hitherto borne herself with a high hand, and had moved about quite independent of the will of her husband, who, indeed, had appeared to have no will of his own; not so now—Helen became little more than a cypher in her own house; her heart sunk within her, and being naturally of a somewhat timid disposition, she yielded a passive obedience to all about her,—alike injurious to domestic discipline and present comfort. This, however, could not long continue; there is a moral heroism in woman—a pride and a dignity of self, that revolts from oppression and injustice—and Helen, after crouching for a time before the sneer and coldness of Hartmann, began to rally from her depression. She was a stranger amongst strangers, and in an atmosphere new to her; nevertheless, she was by right mistress of the establishment, and this right she determined to vindicate. Her functions had, in a great measure, been usurped by Mrs. Hoyd, the housekeeper, aided and abetted by her husband, who openly declared her to be "one little girl, knowing nothing about any thing." She knew indeed far too little—a common fault of boarding-school ladies—nor did she wish to know

more; but she wished to hold her proper rank, and not to be passed by as if there were no Countess of Hartmann in existence.

This led to an immediate rupture with Mrs. Hoyd. Helen, in her ignorance of the ways of the world, probably erred, transferring, as she did, the customs of Manford House to Upper Baker Street. The housekeeper grew warm—then eloquent—then violent—and, finally, vituperative—declaring,

"That she had lived with ladies born and bred—with my Lady Anne This, and the Hon. Mrs. That—that she knew her place, and would either keep it, or she would leave; she would'nt stay to be insulted by her mistress coming into her rooms, and ordering things to be done this way and that way—that she would'nt."

Helen remained firm, though she had arrayed against her the entire corps d' armèe of her domestics, headed by the count, who stormed and swore in his usual quaint fashion. It was a most miserable time for her, without one friend or confidant to support or encourage her. Instances of gross negligence, wastefulness, and impropriety, she was compelled to witness, and often without the power of remedying; and not very unfrequently she had to endure personal affronts—the more galling, because obviously and deliberately intended.—She had no companionship—no society—the count's acquaintances not being of a family nature; and she firmly refused to associate with Mademoiselle Deidamer and several other ladies, whom the count introduced as his "tres bonnes amis" and still more decidedly did she repulse the advances of Deidamer himself, who was, however, assiduous in paying court to her.

Thus, unprotected and exposed to humiliation on all sides, Helen wrote to her mother, begging her, for the love of Heaven, to come to town, and

to forget their foolish quarrel.—Mrs. Manford, however, was surrounded by a family at home, and she had not forgotten their quarrel—an affair indeed that clings longer to old than to young minds, and so she declined coming for the present. This was a severe blow—having made the "amende honorable," she had firmly persuaded herself, that not a letter, but her mother in person, would have been the answer. She grew desponding and nervous, and from the happy and light-hearted maiden was changed into the anxious and care worn wife. The perpetual conflict of feeling soon makes havoc with a woman's moral and physical being, and her mind was seldom at rest. The extravagance of her husband, at home and abroad was partially, and but partially known to her; sufficient, however, came to her knowledge to satisfy her of its imprudence. Her remonstrances were as "words cast to the winds," and the count seemed to take a malicious pleasure in subjecting her to every species of petty indignity that a low and base-born mind could devise.

Several weeks passed away, every one only tending to give her melancholy a deeper tinge of vexation, when one day her husband advised her, somewhat harshely, that "she must go to her home, and bring him some monies. Your father and your mother, and your uncles all are very rich peoples, and do make the moneys in the large houses, called factories.—Go then, mine wife, and bring me one great big sum."

Helen, however, firmly declined the proposed embassy,—of its want of success she had no doubt, and though she would have been glad to have quitted London, a feeling of pride prevented her taking advantage of this opening.

"No," she said, "I brought you a large fortune,

and you can't have spent it, even with all your extravagance, and I'll never go home as a beggar."

"Ah, very well, mine wife, then you must lives as one beggar here; I shall sell mine house, and all mine things, and I shall go to live with mine dear friend Deidamer."

"You cannot be, you dare not be so base as to carry me to that man's house, or near his vile sister.—I'll rather starve in the streets than go!"

"Ah, very well, but mine dear friend, he has all mine moneys, and I must be with him, or I shall be the beggar too."

In fact, the count, partly through avariciousness, and partly through the influence of "la belle Julie," had squandered away and invested a very considerable sum in Deidamer's schemes; not that the fortune he had with Helen was substantially gone, a portion was, however, irretrievably, and he thought it most prudent to prepare for worse things, and accordingly proceeded to put his threat of evacuating the house into effect; Helen's courage failed her at this juncture, and she wrote to her father stating the count's request.

CHAPTER V.

SIR JOHN MANFORD'S SECOND VISIT TO LONDON.

"Exul mentis qui dormusque."
Ovid.

Mrs. Manford, her daughters and friends, had returned to Manford House in any thing but an agreeable temper; neither did it seem that the interval which had elapsed, had done much towards softening her angry feelings. A woman of strong and coarse passions, and practising hospitality upon a boundless scale, she represented poor Helen's conduct as a virtual turning out of doors—an unpardonable offence—and in remembrance of which every palliating circumstance was, as is usual, lost sight of. Sir John Manford and her father shook their heads "a la Burleigh," and grumbled out something about "old fools and young fools." Helen had been a favourite amongst the set, she was the oldest of the new race of manufacturers, and her education had been so far superior to that of the old people, that she had figured as a "star" in her peculiar sphere. On the receipt of her letter, therefore a general council was held: great was the consternation it excited, and many and dolorous were the complaints thundered out against the "foreign fellow," as they now styled the count.

"He's breaking poor Nelly's heart, and he'll ruinate us if we'll let him," said the father, "what a plague you women could not stop with her."

"It's my opinion," said Sir John Manford, "that

one of us should be off by day break, to see how things do stand—as to sending money, that's a thing not to be thought of."

"Well," continued old Mrs. Manford, "poor Nelly! it must be quite shocking to be shut up wi' such a fellow, and not a single creature that she knows. I tell thee what, John, I'll go wi' thee, and we'll put things straight, or else we'll bring Nelly back again."

"No, no mother! you are not for such a journey —I'll go myself; and now I think more of it, I'll be off this afternoon."

"Well—you may, if you likes, Sir John, but she shanna come here—it's all her fault; and I winna have such an example for the rest of the lasses,"—said her mother.

"Thee winna, Nelly, winna thee," answered her husband, "well—we shall see about that any how. However John, I think thee'd better go—thou knows more about London than me; only don't give the foreigner any more money; we've worked hard for it—and we winna let such chaps as him have the spending of it."

In pursuance of this resolution, Sir John Manford, who was a man of despatch when business was concerned, and who had decisively negatived his wife's wish to accompany him, took his departure early in the evening for the nearest point at which the London coaches touched.

On his arrival in town, he lost no time in proceeding to Upper Baker Street. Helen received him as one so situated may be supposed to receive an old and trusted friend. She wept, as she threw herself in his arms, exclaiming—

"Oh uncle! I thought you had all forgotten me."

"No, no, Nelly—but God bless me! thee does look poorly. Where's this grand count o' thine?"

"I don't know—but come into my own room,

and have something to eat. How are they all at home ?"

"Oh, the're all well enough," said Sir John, sitting down, "but lord's sake, thee's got a nice place here."

"Yes, uncle, the house is well enough; but we are just going to leave it."

"Aye, aye—where are ye going next? and prithee, lass, how can ye want money?—that does na look like it."

Sir John listened, with great indignation, to Helen's modified account—for a woman rarely tells the worst, even of a bad husband.

"Who would ha' thought it, of such a quiet 'soft chap as the count, who did nothing all the day but drink and smoke, and run after thee." At last he exclaimed—"Why, he seemed to have no devilment in him, except when he'd got a drop o' drink! But when's he coming in? because my business wi' him will be soon settled."

When Helen informed him that his coming was a matter of doubt, Manford swore lustily, domestic morals not having as yet made it common for husbands to pursue their private amusements amongst the manufacturers, without some reference to their wives."

"Well—but where is he? for I'm determined not to sleep till I've seen him. He used to be a good-natured fellow enough, and 'od rot it he canna surely be so very bad as thee makes one think. One does na mind a sup o' drink, or a bit of a frolic now and then, but this sort o' work winna do."

Helen, however, was as much at a loss, as to his whereabouts, as Manford himself; only she conjectured that he would most likely be found at Deidamer's and there her uncle resolved to proceed, under the guidance of William, the footman.

With a mind full of dudgeon and dogged anger, our worthy knight followed William up one street and down another, till he paused before a handsome looking house in Jermyn Street. On knocking, a liveried menial opened the door, and nodding familiarly to William, replied in answer to his query,—was Count Hartmann there? that he was; Manford then broke in, and desired him, gruffly, to tell the count that Sir John Manford, of Factory Hall, desired to see him. The man showed him into a waiting room, set him a chair, and departed on his errand.

Some time elapsed before any notice was taken by the count, during which Manford's patience waxed exceedingly small; in fact, he was slowly working himself into a furious rage, when at length a lady, of singular beauty and dressed in most splendid apparel, presented herself from a side door before the dazzled eye of the knight. In the sweetest and blandest tone, and in an accent slightly foreign, she excused the delay in her friend Count Hartmann's appearance; he had been not very well—had laid down for a few minutes, but was then dressing for dinner, and would be down instantly. Beauty has a talismanic power over man's passions, and Manford muttered out something about being in a hurry—getting late—the countess—and a long journey.

"Ah!" said la belle Julie, for she it was, "the amiable countess—I wish she would make us happy by her presence. We are very old friends of the count's, and we should delight to do honour to his bride."

If Manford had little of the "gallantry of knighthood" in his composition, he had a considerable share of the animal; and "bright eyes" and gentle speech, set off as these were in the present case by

a winning demeanour, were more than a match for his stoicism.

"Why, ma'am, you see," he commenced, "I'm the countess' uncle, and as you seem to know a great deal about this count, may be you'll tell me something about him in a friendly way, for I wish him sincerely well. Why, if he's poorly, isn't he at home with his wife? I know, if any thing ails me, that my wife's the best nurse, if she happens to be in the right mind."

"Ah," said Julie, smiling, "but you husbands are such capricious and despotic mortals, making no allowance for we poor women, who, whether well or ill, in temper or out of temper, you expect, I suppose, to be ever gay, smiling and satisfied."

"No, no—it's just the very contrary—it's the women that are ever veering about, and that generally manage to think just the contrary to one's self. But speaking of this count, as you are old friends, and as I wish him well ——"

Here the colloquy was cut short by the man himself hurrying in, and embracing Manford, with a warmth and an empréssment quite overpowering.

"Mine dear friend, mine uncle-law, quelle bonheur! it is one grand fête to see you in London; I am all over joy, and you shall have some grand dinner."

This was but a lame and impotent conclusion, but it was natural. Manford's gruff—

"How are you count?"—would most assuredly have been extended to a harsh speech, had not Julie stood before him; the presence of this lady acted as a check in two ways upon him—one, that he felt his family affairs appertained to his immediate connexions, and the second, that a man finds it difficult to break out, into the absolute

rudeness of passion, before a woman of imposing and ladylike appearance.

The purpose of the count was thus answered,—the first outburst of Manford's temper, which he well knew he had skilfully contrived to ward off, and after much persuasion on one side, and many gruntings and objections on the other, Manford permitted "la belle Julie," to place her arm within his, and lead him into the dining-room. Here a scene burst upon him, which, accustomed as he had been to a tolerable degree of splendour in his own circle, fairly dazzled him. A room of magnificent proportions, brilliantly illuminated, and hung with the most costly draperies—a table and side-board groaning with plate and china—splendid and appropriate decorations—a large party, apparently awaiting his coming, rather bewildered the poor knight, who suffered himself to be led to the head of the table, and mechanically seated after a cordial and graceful welcome from Deidamer, who officiated as master of the feast.

The party was composed entirely of gentlemen, the count placed himself beside the wealthy manufacturer, and the business of dinner commenced. Manford had just arrived from a long journey, and in his language had a "Yorkshire thirst" upon him, that is, he was both hungry and dry, and consequently he did ample justice to the rich viands and rare wines that were placed before him. The conversation at table was animated, and his heart thawed in the genial atmosphere. It was Manford's misfortune, as well as that of his country compeers, that their acquisition of wealth had as yet made them value money for its own sake only, and for the sake of the animal enjoyments it enabled them to command, and in this last particular they were in the habit, as it has been already said, of indulging to a great extent. Thus, Sir John eat

and drank, and became merry, and after dinner partook of the bottle with great freedom. The count and his friend, and a knot of jovial fellows, gathercd round him, and by listening to and applauding his sayings, he was led to pronounce them a "a hearty set," and yielding to the excitement, Sir John was in the high road for becoming intoxicated. This was, however, the general termination of his dinings-out, and as he was a seasoned vessel, he would have been little the worse for it, physically speaking, or morally, had it happened with his usual associates.

His relative, the count, did not appear to have any apprehension of evil occurring to him, as he encouraged him by singing his best songs, telling his best tales, and boasting to the company of the wealth, the generosity, and the hospitality of Sir John Manford—whose health and prosperity he repeatedly toasted.

CHAPTER VI.

EFFECTS OF INEXPERIENCE.

"Incidit in scyllam."

Helen had sat up very late, momentarily expecting her uncle and her truant husband. Various misgivings floated through her mind, but she had been so long schooled to consider Sir John as a wise and prudent man, that, although fearing from his strangeness in London some untoward event might have happened to him, she permitted herself to retire to bed, in the belief that he was safe in his own keeping.

Some time in the course of the night he was brought to her house, so completely intoxicated as to be a mere dead weight in the arms of the men who removed him from the coach. Helen, who was disturbed by the noise, dressed herself hastily, and had him carefully put to bed—not the first time she had done him that service—and then left him to sleep off his insensibility. What surprised her was, that the count did not accompany him—nor could she gather any information regarding him from the parties who had brought Sir John away.

It was late on the following morning when the manufacturer awoke from his stupor, and, rousing himself, looked for a few seconds on his bed, and began to comprehend that he was not in his own house, nor in any house where he was in the habit of sleeping. His next step to consciousness was, that he remembered he either was or ought to be

in London, and his next, some faint glimmerings of the previous night's revel. Having so far mastered his oblivion, he rang the bell, and was immediately waited upon by Helen, who brought him his usual succedaneum—tea, and a little brandy.

"Well, Nelly!" said he, turning languidly in bed, "a pretty life you Londoners lead, to be sure. Why, I couldn't have had a more jolly night at Trickles, or at Factory Hall. But I fancy I must have drunk a terrible quantity; I dinna remember coming here a bit—just see if my watch and purse are safe, for there's slippery folks in the streets at night."

Being satisfied on this head, Helen was curious to hear a detail of his experiences. Here he was at fault—the dinner and its immediate sequences he well remembered, and then came a misty idea of singing, and he knew not what beside—a sort of troubled dream, in which were mingled a variety of confused and opposite recollections. To her anxiously repeated question—did he play at cards?—as she had shrewd suspicions of the *animus* of Deidamer's splendid style of living—he could only answer—

"I don't know—I think I didna, except a game or two at put, or three-card-loo, or three-penny whist; but I canna recollect. But away wi' thee, and I'll get up, and see what can be done."

Before Manford descended to the breakfast-room, the count came in, and with the greatest civility asked his wife after her health, and that of her worthy uncle. He laughed very energetically when told of Manford's condition, and rallied him when he made his appearance on his weak head.

"You can drink no more wine than a little child, mine very dear friend. I did use to think you were one very good drinker, but no, no—I must go to Factory Hall and give you some lesson."

Sir John, however, was in no humour for bantering, and he set himself seriously to the business which had brought him to town. His home and blunt inquiries, respecting the contents of Helen's letter, met with evasive and unsatisfactory answers from the count. His whining plea of destitution was founded upon the expenses of a wife and an establishment, and some small debts incurred before marriage, which he had been obliged to liquidate. His whole aspect during this plain interrogatory was so despicably mean, that even his wife turned from him with a feeling of utter contempt. Manford, who was keenly alive to money matters, swore roundly that he would not advance a single shilling; but, on the contrary, must insist on the count's making some suitable settlement on Helen, out of the sum already paid to him. This was rather a late precaution on the part of the Manfords, and was met by a most knowing *shrug* from the "foreign man.' The discussion, of course, ended in nothing; it was the count's business to mystify—and Sir John's acumen could not unravel the mingled web of duplicity and simplicity, in which he contrived to cover up his actual proceedings. The manufacturer could, as he declared, "make neither head nor tail of him," and after much angry declamation on one side, and many bows and grimaces, and "dear uncle-laws" on the other—the parties separated. Manford and his niece spent the day in rambling through the principal West End streets, and he learned from her most of the incidents that had marked her married life. He opposed her leaving London for the present, though, he confessed, that he was afraid the count would turn out nothing but a "wastril," and that they had thrown away a good girl and a good fortune upon a fellow who deserved neither one nor the other. Helen yielded

to Sir John's persuasions to endeavour to be comfortable, and to do her best to make him a good husband. Hartmann, who joined them at dinner, seemed quite undisturbed by the bad success of his wife's request; he was even more than usually vivacious, and declared that they would set out on a tour, as soon as his "dear friend" should leave them for the country. Helen by no means relished this proposal—Manford thought well of it—and as he fixed to quit town on the morrow, orders were given accordingly.

The day after Sir John had taken an affectionate farewell of Helen, giving her privately one hundred guineas for her privy purse, the house in Baker Street was evacuated, with a promptitude and despatch that not a little surprised her; and she found herself on the road to Brighton (she understood) without knowing whither she was bound. This quickness of motion seemed the result of a concerted plan between several parties, as the count was joined by Deidamer and his sister, and other individuals, all of whom embarked in a sailing craft, then about leaving the harbour. Helen's heart died away within her, as she found herself in the midst of her husband's hated companions, and on the wide sea, that appeared to form an impassable barrier between her and her friends. After her first dreadful sea-sickness was over, she vainly endeavoured to extract some comfort and information from her husband, but the count was too busy to attend to her, a violent dispute having arisen between him and another of the party. She could not catch the nature of the quarrel, but fierce words were spoken in a language unknown to her, and but for the intervention of the crew, a personal struggle would probably have consigned one of the quarellers to a watery grave. Hartmann came down into the miserably small cabin, in which

his wife sat trembling and crouching,—foaming with rage, and enacted before her all the phases of a demoniac, threatening vengeance on his foe, in a jargon of languages, and in a variety of tropes and figures characteristic of the man.

This hurried, and as far as it had yet gone, inauspicious commencement of Helen's tour, had originated in causes of which, fortunately, she was in the profoundest ignorance. Her uncle, on arriving at Factory Hall, found a letter waiting his arrival from his banker's at Manchester, the cautious but respectable firm of Jenkins and Company, apprising him that they had no assets in hand to pay his usual trade bills, which were regularly presented there. Of course, it would cause no interruption in his business, as they should be most happy to accommodate him—they merely called his attention to it, after his large draft presented and paid the day previous. Manford stood aghast.

"What's the meaning o' this?" he muttered to himself, "large draft—how the dickins is that?"—and, calling for his horse, he was speedily in the bowels of the clasped folios of Messrs. Jenkins and Co. Greatly to his amazement, he saw his regular check, written in fair characters for his writing—as this was somewhat hieroglyphical in its construction—

"Pay to order, to self or bearer, the sum of ten thousand pounds,

"£10,000.

"JOHN MANFORD."

The sum was not an unusual one for him to draw for, nor would the house have noticed it, except that it was a departure from his general way of managing his money matters, to abstract the whole

of his floating balance, without some memorandum accompanying the check. Manford turned the paper round and round, as if, in the process, he hoped to find the solution of the mystery. The bit of paper was of the kind he always used for his drafts, the writing appeared genuine, and he asked, in a troubled tone—

"Is it paid?"

"Of course—the order is regular—nothing is wrong, we hope."

"It's wrong altogether," he answered, with a face of marvellous gravity, "clean wrong. Who brought it to be cashed!"

The pay clerk was called, and replied, a gentlemanly man of very fashionable exterior, who had asked for as much gold as convenient, and the remainder in Bank of England notes. The disconcerted manufacturer alternately rubbed his chin and his forehead, but said not a word. The numbers of the notes given was ascertained, and orders, advertisements, and handbills were talked of, to stop the circulation. Manford, however, declared, at length, that it was no use; the hand that had done him, he was sure had made clean work—and he departed for Factory Hall, jaded in body, perplexed in mind, and utterly at a loss how to proceed.

CHAPTER VII.

"Tell me, on what holy ground
May domestic peace be found—
Halcyon daughter of the skies."
Coleridge.

Whilst these "chances and changes" were proceeding amongst the wealthy and plebeian Manfords, Sir John Scarsbrook and his lady had been living at Vale Hall, almost in a state of seclusion, not seclusion from the little world immediately around them, but seclusion from the great world of general society. So far was the baronet from having cause, as yet, to repent his union with the foundling, that every day if it did not add to his happiness, served, at least, to perfect and solidify it. His wife seemed to have been born to be the partner of a man of his finely attuned mind and sensibility of temperament: gentle and pure, and so utterly confiding was she, that her presence was a perpetual sunshine of delight,

"Love from Time's wings had stolen the feathers,"

and winter and early spring had passed over their heads, almost unconsciously. Scarsbrook's active benevolence had, however, been unceasingly at work, and he had largely mitigated the evils of a severe season, pressing upon the poor around him. Lady Scarsbrook had been a willing, nay grateful coadjutor, and thus "going about doing good," and in possession of all that her heart could desire, her life was one of passionate and unmingled happi-

ness. If the retrospect of her career had some dark and gloomy points, what a blissful future was in store for her! Not even

'In the newness
Of their first married loves,"

had her attachment to Scarsbrook been more fervent than now; for his graceful tenderness, his complacency, and his manly sweetness were ever displaying themselves.

Many times had Lady Scarsbrook thought of Sir John Manford, and her wishes had been often expressed, that circumstances might again place her in friendly communication with him. His cruel and unmanly desertion of her could not obliterate from her remembrance his long continued kindness; to which kindness she felt she owed all that she now held dear. The practises which had been used to alienate him from her, she was in a great measure acquainted with, and although human charity has its limits, softened and soothed

"as her spirits were by love,"

she would willingly have forgiven even the whole family of her former protector, not the slightest intercourse had, however, existed between them, and she rarely heard of, and had never seen them since her flight from Nelly Tim's cottage.

Late in the Spring, and about the time of the Countess Hartmann's departure from England, the Marquis and Marchioness of Swansbeck arrived at Vale Hall, pursuant to appointment. The friendship between the Marchioness and Lady Scarsbrook was of the warmest and most enduring kind, being founded on a community of feelings and disposition, and she was welcomed with a

cordiality commensurate with the regard in which she was held.

Lady Scarsbrook saw, however, with regret, that the queen-like figure, and splendid beauty of her friend were drooping, and that the marquis was a changed or changing man. His noble bearing and conscious self-dignity had shrunk into abstraction, so that Scarsbrook, on shaking him by the hand, very anxiously inquired after his welfare, and expressed his regret at seeing him so obviously out of health.

"No, my friend, I am well, and even were I not so, the hall with its inmates must act as a restorative. And you, Lady Scarsbrook, I rejoice to see looking more beautiful as a wife than you did even in the blossoming period of unsunned loveliness. But away, with Athalie, who is dying with desire to relate to you all that she has said and done since we parted from you. Not a day has passed without your name being upon her lips."

Lady Scarsbrook and the marchioness were soon seated on the boudoir, and deep in that confidential communication which is so dear to woman. Question and answer were rapidly exchanged, and in the joy of meeting, topics purely personal were for a short time overlooked, nor was it till after coffee, and in the rich and odorous twilight, that they had again the opportunity of being alone, and of talking of feelings and incidents which the presence of the gentlemen had interfered with.

"You are unhappy, Athalie, you who were so lately all the mind could imagine of happiness," said Lady Scarsbrook to her friend, as she flung her arms round her neck, and looked fixedly and fondly upon her, "your sunny smile is gone, and the music of your voice is mournful, and not joyous and cheering as it once was."

"True, *mia carissima*," answered the marchio-

ness, "and what a world I would give to know why. The high esteem in which the marquis holds Sir John, will, I hope, lead him to reveal the poisonous recollections that have lately embittered his life. Oh, my dear Anne, you have witnessed my love, my idolatry for Swansbeck; and the misery I suffer in seeing him unhappy is dreadful. What it is that has robbed him of his peace of mind I dare not ask; for I am sure, that if he thought it fit for me to know, he would tell me. So noble, so generous, and so good as he is, I am at a loss to explain what can oppress him; and he answers all my pleading looks with such unchanging fondness, that I feel I, at least, am not implicated in his uneasiness—I would sacrifice my life to restore his peace of mind."

"He is indeed a noble being, and it is impossible, my dear marchioness, that any thing more serions than ill health. or perhaps some family unpleasantness, should have clouded his mind."

"Oh, my love, I have thought so, but I have watched him when no other eye was upon him, during the long hours of night, and when sleep has partly withdrawn the studied silence, which he ever preserves in my presence. And I have heard him groan and," she continued, in a whisper, "repeat the name of another. And I have listened breathlessly to catch his unuttered sentences, that I might become a comforter. But the sense is always lost, and I can only lie down and weep, and feel how much I love him."

And Anne wept with her, as the tears chased each other down her pale and beautiful cheeks, as she thought of the impassioned Athalie watching, throughout the night, the troubled sleep of one so deeply and devotedly beloved.

They were summoned from the silent reverie in which they had sunk, by Scarsbrook requesting

they would join the marquis and himself in a short walk. The evening was lovely, and as they pursued a devious track through the park, the solemn and soothing thoughts which ever spring up in refind and spiritualized minds in such an hour, gave a softened tone to their conversation, that harmonized well with the feelings of Lady Scarsbrook and the marchioness."

"The evening and the scenery," said the marquis, "remind me of our walks in your own bright land, my Athalie. It is true, some of the peculiar features of the landscape of Salerno are wanting; the superb Indian fig, the aloe, the vine, the ruined loggia, the defaced temple and the wrecks of castle and monastery. Yet here nature vindicates her sovereignty over the mind, and the noble oaks, the tangled woodbine, the rich odour, and the splendid sky, carry the imagination to Sanseverino and its neighbouring convent. Nay, the hall, as it is seen partly hidden by these magnificent lime trees, I could fancy the convent, near the walls of which I spent some of the happiest hours of my life."

"Yes," answered the marchioness, "and from which convent you withdrew the maiden, whose life had been till then that of the caged nightingale, singing to the spicy breezes, and unknowing of the sorrows and dangers of the free denizen of the forest."

"Even so, my love, for it was during my residence in that secluded neighbourhood, that I learnt how

> 'Man forgets
> His stern ambition and his worldly cares,
> And women loathes the pretty vanities
> That mar her nature's beauty."

"Ah! my dear lord, Athalie never knew those vanities," said Lady Scarsbrook.

"Never,—for the world's experience has not shadowed her natural impulses with them, even to this day. It is refreshing," he continued, "to carry back the mind to its first knowledge of

> '"The power, the beauty and the majesty
> That have their haunts in dales, in rugged mountain,
> In forest, or slow stream, or pebbly spring,'

and it is delightful to trace the growth of the religion of nature, if I may so term it, in the heart. It is a cheerful faith, and one full of gentle and affectionate thoughts."

"From which confession you would, I suppose, lead us to infer," said Scarsbrook, "that we owe your devotion to the marchioness to having first become a worshipper of nature,—that her gentle influences prepared your heart for receiving the image of one of her fairest children. Undoubtedly, an intercourse with the grandeur of the material world is the best means of purifying the mind. It was a saying, I believe, of Congreve's, that they

> '"Whom nature's works can charm, with God himself
> Hold converse;'

and certain it is,—that in this converse the imagination frees itself from all that cold philosophy and selfish calculation, which act

> "'like fetters on an angel's wing,'

in repressing many of our most sublime and holy aspirations, whilst treading the path of ordinary life."

"Very philosophical and poetical!" said the soft silvery voice of the marchioness, "and perhaps the allusions just made are highly complimentary to myself.

"'Levan di terra al liel nostr' intelletto'

may be true for the harder minds of men, but woman's heart does not require the aid of these high-wrought fancies to open it for the reception of those hopes and desires, which constitute her world of love."

"No man," resumed the marquis, "who had known the haughty and turbulent d'Harcourt, would have recognised him in the retirement of the half-ruined villa, near Naples; and no one, who had witnessed his profligate career with the sex, would have credited that he should make Athalie, the recluse, his wife. Yes," he continued, in a half musing tone, "to contemplate the past and the present, it seems that man may have two separate and distinct moral existences—that his actions, and the motives of his actions, have as little verisimilitude at different epochs of his life, as exists between the benignity of angelic goodness and fiendish malevolence."

This was probably the first time the marquis had alluded to his early experiences, and Athalie waited anxiously for him to proceed. The romanticism which had bound their hearts together in the first instance, had on her side been the genuing outpouring of a trusting, a loving, and an imaginative disposition; and the enthusiasm of her lover and her husband had seemed not less sincere. Her knowledge of him, since their union, had fostered into ripeness the belief of his generous and noble character—a character which time had mellowed but not robbed of one trait of its susceptibilities. These allusions, therefore, to an earlier period of his history than she was yet acquainted with, naturally became linked with his recent depression and change of manner. Their approach to the hall and some passing incidents broke up the

thread of his discourse, and no opportunity occurred during the evening for its resumption.

The day following was wet and gloomy, and the marquis came down, wearing a face and manner in admirable unison with the weather.

"I used to think myself weather proof," said he, as he joined the baronet and his lady in the breakfast-room, "but the veriest hypochondriac alive, could not just now be more sensible of the state of the atmosphere than I am. However, on the whole, the morning is not unfavourable to my purpose, as I shall trouble you, after breakfast, Sir John, to lend me your attention to a few particulars of my past and present condition, which are harassing and distressing to me."

"Most certainly," answered Scarsbrook, "shall we see the marchioness at breakfast."

"Hardly, I think, she is nervous and oppressed; and Lady Scarsbrook's presence in her own room, would be more grateful than any thing else that could happen to her."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Oh! that deceit should dwell
In such a gorgeous palace."
Shakspeare.

After Lady Scarsbrook had retired, the marquis turned to the baronet, and said, somewhat abruptly—

"You must have noticed, Sir John, the evident distress of my wife, and my own change of manner, since we left you in the autumn. I am perfectly conscious of the alteration in myself, and Athalie's tearful eyes are eloquent in their meaning. I want assistance, or rather the confidence of some man in whose friendship I can trust. You are that man, and with your permission, I will at once explain the cause of my uneasiness."

"I am honoured, my lord, by your confidence, my assistance, I need not say, is at your unlimited command. I confess I shall rejoice greatly, in seeing the marchioness and yourself resume your wonted cheerfulness; as it would be false delicacy to deny that I have noticed your dejection."

"The cause of my anxiety arises from circumstances which I had believed to be forgotten by myself—but the memory of wrong, even in the breast of the wronger, may sleep, but it never dies. On leaving Highcliff," he continued, "we removed to the coast of Devonshire, to a small house I have built purposely for the marchioness' winter residence, her southern culture having made her delicately alive to the temperature of this chang-

ing season. During our necessarily limited walks, we found that we were perpetually haunted by a squalid woman, whose pertinacious demands for assistance, though often gratified, seemed to lead only to more exorbitant expectations, till finally, on being desired to leave the neighbourhood, she broke out, in my presence as a magistrate, into a violent strain of denunciation against me, not less unexpected than singular, as it contained allusions to events long since past, and known to few, if any, that are now living. I had, indeed, striven to bury them in the profoundest oblivion—I had committed more than one error for that purpose—I had filled my heart with the love of one, the best and loveliest of her sex, and I believed, not only that the world had forgotten them, but that my own heart had ceased to be capable of feeling either bitterness or fear at the remembrance. The ravings of this wretched woman at once taught me that I erred in both particulars. So far was my mind from being proof against fear or bitterness, that a wound I had thought long closed opened anew, with all the painfulness of its original smart; and so far was the world from having forgotten my crimes or my errors, that here, in the very dregs of society, I found one vaunting of the knowledge, and upbraiding me, face to face. In the conflict of awakened reminiscences, and whilst too deeply occupied in a bitter scanning of the past, the woman quitted the room unquestioned, and left me, on waking from my reverie, a prey to contending emotions.

"It is painful," continued the marquis, after a short pause, "to lay bare one's own acts of villainy—it is painful to make the tongue speak what the conscience has condemned—and it is painful to recall those passages of my life, which I could wish had formed no part of my personal history.

For myself I should care little, but the marchioness has claims upon my honour and my tenderness, that render it imperatively necessary, that the consequences of the passages to which I am alluding, should be narrowly and closely investigated. The assertions made by the unknown woman would, if true, rob Athalie of a husband, and her child, (should it please God to bless us with one) of my inheritance. Judge, therefore, of my uneasiness, when a woman whom I have loved, and whose trust has been thrown utterly upon me, is thus threatened, and myself made to appear a heartless monster, who could win the love of a creature like her, at a time when my hand and my fortune belonged to another."

The marquis here became much excited, and after walking hurriedly through the room for a few seconds, again sat down and went on.

"I ask your friendly aid, Scarsbrook, in this agitating emergency, because I dare not trust myself. My wild and wayward youth, with all its passions and its follies, although followed by my sobered and meditative manhood, has, I fear, left traces of its potent impulses still within me. The cloudless life I have passed for years with one 'pure minister,' has not quenched the fire which then blazed only to destroy; the crust that had grown over it, soldered by the hand of love and of time, is I feel giving way, and in the fierce emotions which occasionally overcome me, I recognise a remnant of those evil passions, which have already caused me bitter regret.

"Upwards of twenty years ago, I was a younger branch of the noble house, the representative of which I now am. That exclusive and self-indulgent system of education which is followed by our aristocracy, acted with fatal power upon my physical and intellectual temperament: my wayward

and headstrong temper and my haughty yet irritable disposition might perhaps have been modified by judicious culture, if they were not called into being by the absence of all control. As a boy, I was distinguished for my proud bearing, and there grew with me a spirit of selfishness that must have choked up the best portions of my moral nature. My code of ethics was a brief and universal one—the supremacy of my own will,—and with this I entered on the theatre of life, likely, from the accident of birth, to fill a distinguished and honourable post in society. It was my curse to become notorious amongst the fashionable *ephemeræ* of that date, for what is called gallantry. I was an intriguer and betrayer of the sex, because it seemed to be expected I should be so; a seeker of unlawful *liaisons*, for the most base and selfish gratification; and a destroyer of female reputation, for the simple reason—that I made it my vocation. In the midst of this criminal career, when my pathway seemed to have roses scattered in it, merely that I might crush them, I left London on a lengthened visit to a relative in the north of Ireland. The change was far from striking, and I meditated a quick retreat from the monotony of D—— Castle, when the party was joined by Agnes Raymond and her brother—the descendants of an old Milesian family. We had, however, never met. I had studiously avoided Raymond—a noble but impetuous young man, proud of his lineage, but greatly reduced in fortune. Agnes Raymond, however, though superciliously received by some of our set, soon attracted my observation. She was a lovely girl, just bursting into full womanhood, with the voluptuous figure of a Venus, but with the purity and high-mindedness of her country-women. My advances were repulsed, and the simple Irish girl, whose education had been conducted abroad,

scorned the proud wooer, and placed him on a level in her regards with the rest of the community. The Hon. Trevor d'Harcourt was to her but the Hon. Trevor d'Harcourt, and she refused to acknowledge him either as the '*arbiter elegantarum*,' or the arbiter of her peace of mind. This was just—it was noble on her part—and so well did she vindicate the prerogative of her sex, that I left the castle a wiser if not a better man than I had entered it, for I had mingled with people whose faculties were unchained by the customs of my own exclusive circles.

"The dissipation of a younger brother, joined to a younger brother's means, involved me in a serious quarrel with my father. My hot and violent passions broke out before him, and my allowances were withdrawn, in a way that seemed to me harshly unjust. This drove me to expedients hateful to me, for though selfish I was not mean in my ideas; and, to avoid worse evils, I again visited Castle D——, and again came into contact with Agnes Raymond. But a change had come over my spirit, and now, in place of claiming, I sought her regards. Her pre-eminent beauty made a powerful impression upon my senses, and I at length worked myself into the belief that I fondly and desperately loved her. My regards, which had hitherto wandered about like an *ignis fatuus*, luring the watcher to destruction, became a fixed and burning flame, sacred, I believed, and unquenchable as the altar-fire of the disciples of Zoroaster.

"The love of man is omnipotent over woman. Agnes Raymond had viewed me with haughty disdain, her mind had been poisoned with tales of my heartless career, her family pride had been roused by my cold and supercilious treatment of her brother, and yet Agnes Raymond and Trevor d'Harcourt might, after a time, be seen walking alone, amidst the

magnificent woods and scenery surrounding Castle D——. Yes, day after day the cool light of dewy morning, the glow of mid-day heat, and the soft and voluptuous hou. of twilight found them arm in arm, or hand in hand, or seated in some far off nook—their own eyes the sole witnesses of their deeds—their own hearts the sole records of their feelings. God! what an intense and passionate longing has been implanted in us for the love of woman! what a vehement and irrepressible desire for her association! How the world becomes a region of romance, when revelling in the consciousness of being beloved—how the multitude of feelings which spring up within the heart clothe the common air, and sky, and earth, with the finest poetic attributes!

"Our attachment was sufficiently patent, it was rumoured abroad, it reached the ears of my father, and I received a stern letter, charging me to return to England; as he had prospects in view for me, more fitted for my rank and talents, than love-making to the descendant of an impoverished and disloyal family.

"I married Agnes Raymond in secret, before a priest of her own persuasion. There was neither pomp nor ceremony nor witness, and after a brief, but passionate enjoyment of my bride, the sudden death of two elder brothers required my presence in England. One feeble and enervated man now only stood between me and the marquisate; my energies were directed into a new channel—ambition grew up in my mind, and my promised return to Ireland was delayed from time to time, till the perennial curse of that country overtook her, and civil embroilment and religious fanaticism caused the shedding of blood. Amongst the most conspicuous actors, on the occasion, was the brother of my wife; he was actively engaged in organizing

the disaffected, and was marked out by government as a victim. The sword, however, saved him from the scaffold, and he perished, fighting bravely and openly for the cause which he had espoused.

"I had already connected myself with the government, and had taken a vigorous and uncompromising position with regard to Ireland. Agnes was devotedly attached to her brother, and more than one letter had passed between us, on the subject. Nothing could exceed the tenderness of our written regards,—but I was a man of circumstances; and it would and did happen, that my premature and secret union annoyed me.

"Whether or not my letters betrayed this, I know not, but on learning that she had left her friends, and sought out and tended her dying and miserable brother, my loyal and aristocratic prejudices were roused, and an angry and harsh epistle commanded her into privacy on pain of my displeasure. I have read her answer within the last few days, and its touching simplicity, and the truth and beauty of its sentiment leave me in wonder, that *then* it did not make me honour her. I, however, spurned at it, fiercely upbraided her, and threatened worse consequences. She stood, indeed, in my path,—I had permitted myself to believe that she did so, and I contemplated her removal. My heart closed against her. I argued that I should be degraded by acknowledging a connexion with a proscribed race—I who was high in place and in honour.

"I left London—I sought out her humble home—but I met a spirit as high and resolved as my own. Her affections, if not alienated, had been warped by the scenes through which she had gone, and she seemed prouder of the supposed heroism of her brother, than of the rank and position of her husband. A fierce and burning enthusiasm for

revenge upon the murderers of her brother, met my angry remonstrances, and she threw into my hands, with contempt, our correspondence, the sole proof of the claim she had upon me, as I was given to understand that the priest, who had officiated at our nuptuals, had perished in the struggles which had been going on around him. I left her in, what I flattered myself, a state of partial madness, brought on by my own conduct, and the fate of her only near relative. I left her as one whose destiny was no longer mingled with mine; and I looked on our brief intercourse as being closed for ever.

CHAPTER IX.

"Il n'est jamais permis de détériorer une ane humaine pour l'avantage des autres."

Rousseau.

"The political party to which I was attached, had been slowly, but surely losing its hold upon the popular mind; and the most strenuous efforts were made to reinforce our ranks from those, whose influence and talents in opposition, might become powerful addenda to our failing strength. You must have known Mr. T——, who was at that time, if not the acknowledged leader of his party, one of its most important members; his inpendence was more than a match for our temptations, till it was conjectured that he might be assailed through his only child, a daughter to whom he was known to be greatly attached. I offered, in my political Quixotism, to assail her, an important official situation being reserved both for myself and Mr. T—— should I be successful.

"The utter baseness of such an arrangement will doubtless shock you, but I was a partisan, and virtue was calculated from expediency. I sought Miss T——, and I found her a plain and coarse-minded woman, from whom, under ordinary circumstances, I should have shrunk. Proud, vain, and plebeian as she was, the aristocrat was well received, and Mr. T——, if not flattered on his own account, was flattered on his daughter's, by my marked attentions. I married her, and if we

gained no power from T——, we lopped off a troublesome limb from our enemy.

"But what an amount of misery and crime sprung from this moral turpitude! I did not, I could not love Lady d'Harcourt: I had sacrificed domestic comfort for party purposes, which after all proved unavailing, and ere long my indifference grew into dislike. Her coarseness degenerated into licentiousness, and my bed was dishonoured by a near relative and friend of my own. My passions were at all times fierce and implacable,—fierce in their first outbreak, and deadly in their continuance: I did not slay her, but I drove her forth ignominiously from my defiled threshold, and her paramour perished by my hand. T——, stung with paternal rage, and accusing me of encouraging the criminality of his daughter, loaded me with the foulest abuse. I bore much from the old man—I reined in my wrath—and when in his paroxysm of fury, he struck me, and called me coward, I did not kill him on the spot, but we met on honourable terms, and the father fell by the hand of his adopted son! Society rose in arms against me, and why? I had but vindicated my own honour, according to laws which had its sanction. I was shunned, and had not moral courage to wait for the reflux of feeling. All the haughty and vindictive portions of my nature were excited—I deemed myself the injured party—I accused my friends of injustice—and, after taking the proper steps for having my marriage annulled, I shook the dust from my feet and departed—a voluntary exile from my country.

"Time and reflection gradually effaced the scars which my early life had marked on my mind. I held in abhorrence many of the actions I had committed, and a lengthened residence in Italy had, I believed, completed the work of regeneration in

my moral and intellectual man. I found Athalie beautiful, graceful, and pure as the spiritual embodyings of a poet's dream, and I wooed and won her, and I have since worn her as the brightest jewel of my existence. I returned to England, not as Lord Trevor d'Harcourt, but as the Marquis of Swansbeck. High in rank and loaded with wealth, I was received into my appropriate circle as a new man, no remembrance appearing to exist of my former career.

"I have thus briefly run over my experiences in order that you may understand my character,—I have striven to understand it myself, and it is but just, that in asking your aid, you should know fully all the circumstances which will have to be raked up for or against me;—whether my moral stamina were originally weak, or whether a course of early profligacy injured the tone of my mind I know not, but since the reminiscences of my marriage with Agnes Raymond have been brought before me, I have experienced a painful sense of nervous agitation, that unfits me for the investigation I feel to be necessary, for my own sake as well as the marchioness'.

"And now to the point—The woman whose ill omened presence first broke up my comfort, is, I am satisfied, following my footsteps. After leaving Devonshire, she again broke in upon us at Highbury, and I listened more calmly than I had previously done, to her strange, yet coherent assertions, and she declares that my first wife lives, and that a child was the fruit of our union."

CHAPTER X.

"Fronti nulla fides."

Sir John Scarsbrook had listened to the confession of the marquis with mingled emotions of surprise and pity. He had some difficulty in reconciling himself to the belief, that the noble and dignified Swansbeck, whose fine philosophy and generous admiration of all that was beautiful and good, had so long delighted him, and made him his closest friend, could have played so foul and disgraceful a part, as he represented himself to have done. He remained silent for a few seconds after the marquis had finished his narrative, rapidly revolving in his mind, the leading incidents of "this strange eventful history."

"I am, my lord," he at length said, "sensible of the confidence you have reposed in me, and regard for yourself and the marchioness will make me anxious to clear away, as far as possible, the mystery spoken of by the woman, whom you have described. It is remarkable that so long a period should have elapsed, without the slightest rumour having reached you, as to the ultimate fate of your (allow me to say) neglected wife—for wife, according to your own acknowledgment, she was; although the marriage might have been invalid, according to law; or that now no proof remains, beyond your own sense of justice, of the ceremonial."

"Neglected, my friend, say, rather, betrayed; for since I awoke from the dream of mere worldly ambition, I have felt that my undeserved neglect

and unnecessary harshness, robbed me of her love, if it did not deprive her of reason. With this feeling, you may wonder that I have taken no steps for ascertaining her ultimate fate. The cowardice of guilt has held me back, aided by the sensitiveness of false pride, and the hopelessness of the task. Who or what this woman may be, I am in perfect ignorance of; but from the disclosures she has already made to me, I am satisfied that she has a full acquaintance with all the particulars of the life of Agnes Raymond."

"Presuming that her story be correct, my lord, what are your intentions?"

The marquis paced the room agitatedly.

"I know not, I cannot resolve; the alternative of committing farther wrong upon an innocent woman and her offspring, the eternal disgrace of proclaiming my villany, the consequences to the marchioness, who has thrown her entire trust upon me, and a multitude of conflicting thoughts, deprive me of the power of cool consideration. I would fain persuade myself that the whole is the conjuring up of an excited imagination—a waking dream—from which time will free me, but in the meanwhile it weighs upon my spirit like an incubus. The few weeks which have elapsed, since the communication was made to me, of the existence of my deserted wife, have undone the work of years. It has brought into full exercise, passions and feelings which I had believed to be for ever eradicated;—it has broken up a new code of ethics, which I had built up for myself, from a pure and holy source; and it has thrown me back into regions of crime and false dealing, which it has been the grand aim of half my life to forget. We can, however, do nothing till the reappearance of this boding woman, and, in the meantime, in the consciousness that I have, at least, a friend and

an adviser, in my emergency, I shall wait as cheerfully as I can."

Subsequent to this conversation, Sir John and the marquis had many conferences on the subject of it, and as many days elapsed without the party being interrupted by any sinister occurrence, the latter obtained some respite, and appeared gradually recovering his equanimity. Her ladyship found, too, in the unaffected tenderness of Lady Scarsbrook, the best balm—

"for hurt minds,"

namely, a full appreciation of the nature of her sufferings, and a cordial sympathy with them; and the smile of hope and love again mantled brightly over her features.

It was rather late in the evening, when the marquis and marchioness, with Sir John and Lady Scarsbrook, were returning from a neighbouring proprietors, with whom they were in the habit of occasionally associating, that their cheerful and animated conversation was interrupted, by a woman suddenly emerging from a cross lane, and placing herself in their path. Her air and appearance was that of a gipsy, and Scarsbrook, though surprised at the abruptness of her approach, very gently and kindly desired her to move on, as she stood directly in front of his wife. She, however, remained stationary, and as he turned round to speak to the marquis, his quivering lip and pale cheek proclaimed, at once, that his dreaded visitant was before him.

Scarsbrook immediately called Jem Ward, who was attending them, forwards; and ordered him to seize the intruder, and take her to the hall, wisely judging, that any delay would tend to confusion, and would be likely to bring on a scene

which he wished neither of the ladies to witness. Ward, a powerful and active man, expected to find a sturdy beggar, but he had no need for the exercise of his strength, as the woman walked quietly beside him, on hearing Scarsbrook's command; muttering between her teeth, but without any display of violence or opposition. His lady protested against this step as a harsh one, and would have given the supposed mendicant some money, and permitted her to seek her home for the night according to her own pleasure. In this she was warmly seconded by the marchioness, who unknowing of the particular cause of her lord's uneasiness, was little likely to recollect, in this person, the insolent beggar, who had once annoyed them in a different part of England.

Whilst the two ladies were thus pleading, the woman turned repeatedly to observe them; and a softened and even gratified expression of face took place of the sullen and obstinate look, with which she had at first regarded them. Scarsbrook's motives, for having her secured, were, however, of too imperative a nature to permit him to be swayed, and on reaching the hall, he gave directions for her retention during the night, every care being taken to provide her with comforts. These measures he superintended in person, and then used every precaution to isolate her completely from all around her.

When the ladies had retired, Sir John and the marquis sat late, arranging such memoranda as might serve as tests of the woman's veracity, should she, on cross-examination, repeat her story. It was decided too, that Scarsbrook should, in the first instance, see her alone.

On entering the room, in which she was confined, early on the following morning, he had an opportunity of examining her person and general

aspect. She presented the appearance of a woman of perhaps thirty-five or forty years of age, bronzed by the weather, with features of a coarse but decided cast, which once might have been handsome. Care and suffering, rather than time, had thrown over them a harsh and rugged angularity, set off by a pair of large and open eyes, which met the gaze of Scarsbrook, as if she knew, and was prepared to meet his inquiries. Her dress, without being squalid, was sufficiently wretched to attest either poverty or carelessness.

After some general observations, on mendicity, and his determination not to suffer from imposture, he went at once to the point he had at heart, and said—

"You are, I believe, the individual who has more than once accosted the Marquis of Swansbeck; with what intention beyond that of soliciting charity, I cannot guess. At these times, however, you have made various assertions, respecting my noble friend, so wild and visionary, that we are compelled to think you are either an impostor, or that you are labouring under some gross error."

"I am not an impostor," she answered hastily, "and the proud man shall know I am not in error. It was not thus," she contined, her eyes lighting and her attitude changing into one of great animation, "it was not thus that Trevor d'Harcourt once sought me—it was not thus, that once he thought or spoke of Agnes Raymond!—and let him not think that a woman who has once loved, can forget the man of her affections; she may hate—may curse—may spurn him—but to forget him is impossible!"

"You speak of Agnes Raymond," said Scarsbrook, somewhat surprised at the wild energy of the woman's manner not less than at the subject of her speech—"who was, or who is this person, and

how is she connected with my noble friend? I thus question you because I would not be unnecessarily severe towards you, whilst at the same time as a magistrate I am bound to protect him, as well as others, from annoyance."

"Who was Agnes Raymond?" she exclaimed—"let him ask his own heart! Who is Agnes Raymond? I am."

"Your language and manners would denote some touch of madness, rather than those of a woman likely either from birth, education, or person, to attract the notice of the Marquis of Swansbeck."

"It may be so—it perhaps is so—for Agnes Raymond, or rather the Marchioness of Swansbeck of to-day, is not the Agnes Raymond that twenty years ago won the regards of Trevor d'Harcourt, as the fairest of the brilliant throng in which he moved. Yes; *I* won the heart of even the proud and profligate man—*I*, who thus stand degraded and deformed before you. Shorn and stript, as I am, of every outward attribute that once distinguished me, who has been the spoiler?—who has robbed me of name—of kindred—of child—of all that woman holds most dear?—who, but the man who swore, before the priest and the altar, to cherish and protect me! Years flew away, but I sought him not—I despised—I hated him—and had I not cause? Did he not slay the noblest and best of brothers?—he had been to me a father, a mother, a sister, and a friend; and did he not mock my grief?—did he not scoff at him, even on his dying pallet?—did he not turn round and fiercely arraign me, for tending my wounded, my murdered brother?—did he not add bitterness even to that hour of agony, and taunt me for a lineage a hundred times nobler than his own—and that in the presence of the last, but high-souled remnant of our race?—did he not basely desert me, and

carry away, by force and fraud, what he conceived to be the sole evidence of our union? Can a woman's love survive this?—mine did not—I scorned him!"

The coherence and connexions of the woman's ideas belied the tone and manner in which she gave them utterance. Her wild and distracted air spoke of deranged intellect, but if she were mad, there was a "strange method" in it; and as Scarsbrook listened to, and watched her, the conviction was becoming strong, that the former wife of Swansbeck was before him, from whence sprung, and how supported since her desertion, remained to be discovered. The position in which a *denouement* of this kind would place the marquis, and his present lovely and beloved wife, was one so fraught with painful circumstances, that he remained silent some seconds, turning it over in his mind. The close similarity of the history given by his noble friend, and that of the prisoner, left not a doubt on a *prima facie* view of the matter of the identity of the parties. A man of mere worldly prudence might have argued, that the woman was poor, friendless, and possibly deranged, and, consequently, that there would be no difficulty in disposing of the extraordinary claim, thus summarily urged against a man of Swansbeck's station and influence. But Sir John Scarsbrook took a higher view of the subject, it was neither the man nor the woman that weighed in the scales of his judgment, it was the right or wrong of the question. Whilst thus communing with himself, the claimant sat passive, till, suddenly stirred by some emotion or memory of the past, she advanced close up to him, and said—

"Sir John Scarsbrook, you have the fame of a good and honourable man, I implore justice from you; I ask but for that which is my right—my suf-

ferings demand some reparation. Youth has been to me a time of utter misery—I am old when others are young—I have sinned, and I have repented. Pass me over if you will, but for the sake of heaven—for the love of your wife—from your own hope of being a father—restore me my child—give me back my lost cherub, and take all besides.

Oh, I have been mad! mad! mad! for ages. I have sought it by day and by night. But I became sane—I knew my folly—my prison doors were opened, and I have haunted the steps of Trevor d'Harcourt, thinking that my hatred would be gratified, by being ever at his side, and knowing that I had the power to blast his happiness. But I erred, I knew not my own heart—the sight of the father of my child has roused again a yearning so deep, that it must be satisfied. Give me my child, and all will be well."

During this passionate appeal, the unhappy woman had thrown herself on her knees before him, and it was with some difficulty he succeeded in pacifying her, and again bringing her to a state of composure. The mingling of maternal feeling with the fervour of insanity was exceedingly touching, and Scarsbrook's sympathies were fully roused for the miserable woman. Her condition was obviously that of one sound in mind on some points, but maniacal on others; or rather it might be, that long suffering and sorrow had deeply engraven one train of thought on the mind, which thus perpetually and overpoweringly made itself manifest.

He assured her that justice would be done to her. "But," he said, "you must be conscious, that a claim like yours, in the present situation of my noble friend, demands the closest scrutiny. What and where is this child, of which you speak? the marquis is in ignorance of its existence; and what proofs beyond your own simple declaration, have

you, that you are what you describe yourself to be —the wife of the noble marquis?"

"I know not; years and years have rolled away since I, wretch that I was, abandoned my child, for one baser and viler than d'Harcourt. Years have flown, and misery, deep and deadly, had almost smothered my feelings. I—I—who had loved it—who had nursed it amidst wreck and famine—who had hugged it to my bosom, even when my heart was torn by the fiercest despair; I loved it for its own sake—not for his, the betrayer and deceiver. But it lives—yet lives—and d'Harcourt knows it!"

Scarsbrook again assured her that she was wrong; but it was in vain—she obstinately persisted in the assertion—and it became more and more obvious, that a tinge of lunacy coloured her ideas. He left her with mingled feelings of pity, and of uneasiness for the marquis. The tale he had to tell him was sufficiently repulsive, and though consistent in its leading features, so strained in other particulars, that he knew not what opinion to form on the whole. That she was the once beautiful and high-souled Agnes Raymond appeared certain, and as he felt that Swansbeck's injustice had laid the foundation of her sufferings, so also he felt that he owed her reparation. Beyond this, her whole statement was a mystery. The birth of her child—its subsequent abandonment—the love she cherished for it, after the lapse of so many years —all this to say the least of it, was singular, and not very easily to be explained; whilst from the state of her mind, there did not appear much hope, that any clue would be found for unravelling the strange history.

CHAPTER XI.

a history,
Full of strange figurings,"
Anonymous.

During this prolonged conference, Swansbeck had walked out, unable to control his anxiety. The long interval which had passed since his connexion with Agnes Raymond, did not prevent memory calling up the splendid and lovely woman, that had subdued his heart in the period of young and impetuous manhood, nor could any stretch of fancy change her into the squalid and repulsive being, who seemed to have come across his path like a dark and fearful vision.

On his return, he found the baronet in the library. Scarsbrook went over his conversation with the woman, and ended by expressing his conviction, that there was some truth in her account, although much of it was more like a confused dream than the story of a life.

"My God!" exclaimed the marquis, "then are my worst fears realized; your calm and temperate judgment would not mislead you. Is not the woman friendless, and poor, and utterly destitute?—I thank heaven she is in our power. Not for a million of worlds would I lacerate the heart of my wife, by the terrible disclosures of my villany. Happily towards her I have no wrong to remedy; legally I may be in error, morally I am not."

"But remember, my lord, that you have, at least, an act of justice to render to the woman, who it seems has a right to call you husband, providing

we are not dealing with an impostor. The child, by some strange perversion of reason, she persists in declaring you must know something about; and the wildness of her manner may well make me doubt the whole of this part of her story. She is in our power, it is true, but that does not lessen her hold upon you. Humanity demands that she should be attended to, had she no other claim upon our sympathies. Her fate appears to have been a horrible one, it is time its evils should be mitigated."

"And it is your decided opinion, Scarsbrook, that the woman is the relic of Agnes Raymond? Can humanity be so moulded by change of circumstances? If it be so, retributive justice has, at length, overtaken me. Were I to bear the shame and disgrace alone, I might sustain it—but with Athalie!—Oh, God!—to her it would be gross injustice."

"I think you take a morbid view of the painful subject. I do not apprehend that any fear exists but that your union with the marchioness may be rendered valid. From the woman's own confession her life has been a criminal one; the process of annulling your ill-fated marriage may be a distressing one, yet every consideration of honour and justice, and humanity points to this as your only course."

"Has she proofs in her possession? Is she able to produce evidence to satisfy us that there is no fraud? Are we to destroy our happiness and comfort for the wild raving of a lunatic?"

"Your own conscience, my lord, is the witness against you, and if, in comparing the woman's statements with your own, you are satisfied that she is the person she professes to be, you ought, as a man, to search out the proofs legally wanting, and upon those proceed at once. I think you had better see the woman; a few questions would satis-

fy you—I feel the delicacy of the step,—but what other can you take?"

"It is impossible, Scarsbrook,—I cannot look upon her—I leave my interest unconditionally in your hands—but for God's sake spare me the shame and misery of contemplating the wreck my own evil passions have created!"

"I will not, at present, urge you more on the point, though I still think it would be the most summary and direct mode of putting an end to this unpleasant affair. I will see her again, and reduce her narrative to a more consistent form."

They now joined the ladies, who earnestly inquired after the unfortunate woman who had annoyed them on the previous evening. Both were anxious to see and assist her, as they felt sure her intrusion was caused by distress.—This, however, Scarsbrook thought proper to overrule; he knew not how far the discretion of the woman might be trusted; and the shock of a sudden disclosure might overthrow the marchioness' delicate health. He promised, however, to become their almoner, and having seen them to the carriage for a lengthened drive, he again visited the woman, determined now that he had the main incidents of her career before him, to connect these together, and to come to some definite understanding respecting her. He found her tranquilised, and willing to give him whatever information he wished.

"I am," he said, "anxious to hear from your own lips, such a brief outline of your life as may enable me to advise not only my noble friend but yourself; as, in so far as I am concerned, I am resolved to do that which is right. If you are the Agnes Raymond, and I am disposed to place credit in your statement, what you have been merits that you should be treated with every regard, and that your subsequent misfortunes should be alleviated

to the utmost. I speak to you with the most perfect sincerity and candour, let me entreat you to do the same."

"I thank you, and believe you," she answered. "It is long since the voice of a noble and generous man spoke to me, in accents of kindness; and I am not so lost, have not so completely forgotten the past, as to be insensible to its impression. I feel better and more composed now that I perceive I have found one, through whom I may hope to be safe from evils that have driven me to madness. I have addressed d'Harcourt in a voice of bitterness and hatred, I will do so no more. My story is but a short one—if I speak falsely it will be easy to detect me. I shall repeat to you nothing but the truth, however shameful that truth may be to myself."

CHAPTER XII.

"Like a broken limb unused,
Grows stronger for the breaking."
Richard Fourth: Part Second.

"You know from d'Harcourt, the woman commenced, "of his clandestine and secret marriage with Agnes Raymond; what I then was, let him inform you; what I am now you will shortly know —I regretted not his departure—my heart was full of another object—my brave and noble brother, the victim of cruelty and injustice, who died in my arms, after dreadful sufferings. My whole being was bound up in him, in him who had been my friend and companion from childhood, in him who had watched over me with a father's tenderness and devotion. The descendent of the ancient kings of Ireland in a miserable hovel, the representative of a noble family, died in the fear that his body would be ignominiously exposed like that of a felon—and I was alone in the wide world. A hasty and dishonoured grave received the last of the Raymonds, and I found myself without a home or shelter; I might have shared the bounty of some of those whose only title to nobility arose from our own family, but the name was proscribed—I must have eaten the bread of bitterness and degradation —my name and lineage forgotten, and away from the haunts of society.

"All this was told me whilst my heart was torn with grief for the noble brother I had just lost, and I scorned the proposition; beggary and disgrace might be my lot, but beggary and dis-

grace were welcome to my outraged feelings. The government of the day, of which my husband formed part, pursued the relics of the insurrection, in which my brother had been engaged, with the most malignant and fierce persecution. To these I should have been a welcome and honoured guest, but they were scattered, their property ruined, and their lives at a price; there was no resource for me, unless I had stooped to ask countenance and protection from d'Harcourt.

"Our secret marriage, and the subsequent distraction of our affairs, with my intense sorrow, had placed it out of my power to produce evidences of my right. He was high and powerful, I poor and friendless, with none to counsel or guide me, and the attempt could not have succeeded. But I thought little of this, then, nay, it is likely, that had he offered me assistance I should have indignantly refused it, for my proud spirit was in arms against him and his country, for he had mocked my sorrows when at their uttermost.

"I quitted the obscure village in which I had tended the last moments of Henry Raymond, after securing the miserable pittance left of our dilapidated fortunes, and accompanied a few attached friends of the holy cause for which many had perished, to Dublin, with the intention of leaving Ireland for France, where I meant to seek an asylum in the convent in which I had been educated, and to bury myself and my woes in the cloister. A base and suborned spy gave information of our movements to government, still exercising its ruthless ferocity in immolating victims to its bigotry and cruelty. Several were seized, whilst the rest escaped on board a small vessel, and were landed at Bristol.

"Poverty and dissension soon separated us, and, after suffering extreme privations, I found myself

a solitary wanderer in the streets of London. Yes, the beautiful and delicately nurtured Agnes Raymond was wandering an outcast and a beggar before the proud gates and magnificent mansion of her husband!—But the rich man's gates open not to the poor suppliant; I degraded myself by knocking, and the pampered menial threw me a penny. I spat upon it—I trampled it in the dust, for I was wound up to fury.

"Why did I seek d'Harcourt?—Not for myself, not that Agnes Raymond might sue to him for succour for her own sake, not that he might call back the bloom and beauty of her withered youth, but that I knew I should become a mother, my spirit yielded to the promptings of maternal instinct—I would have thrown myself at his feet to have secured my child from the dreadful fate that stared me in the face. For this purpose I sought him, and his liveried servant gave me the alms of a beggar. I turned from his house in a state of madness. Oh God, how I hated him then!

"In this state of mind I returned to my humble lodging, in an obscure and wretched part of the town. My kind and sympathizing countrywoman tended me carefully, without hope of recompense, and for many weeks I remained a prey to despair. My condition robbed me of strength, I sunk down into utter and hopeless apathy, and prayed for death. It was denied me,—I became a mother—and the daughter of Trevor d'Harcourt, the heiress of a noble family, was born in a sty, fitted only for the refuse of society. I lived, and my heart opened as I pressed the unconscious innocent to my breast; all the love of a mother was poured out upon it; inheritor as it was of my misfortunes, I loved only with greater intensity.

A complete change was worked in me by this event; as the cry of my child fell upon my ear, I

felt that I had something to live for: as its smiles met my gaze, I knew that I had something to love; I aroused myself and rallied my spirits, and a rapid recovery soon saw me in health and strength, as protectress of the lovely child. How I doated upon it—my love for it was a passion, and grew in strength daily; I laboured and toiled for it, I sought out the humblest employment, and I again felt happy; my child was the repayment of my sufferings, and I cherished it more fondly than if it had been pillowed on down; yes, in the cold and cheerless chamber of poverty, were called into activity, all the yearning of a mother's love; on my child were centred all my hopes and wishes; I had nothing on earth to divide my affections, nothing to interrupt the current of my attachment, nothing to mingle with my devoted love for it—it was my all, my every thing—as it smiled and nestled in my bosom, no language can describe my happiness."

Hitherto the woman's narrative had been uninterrupted, and clear, and perfectly distinct—but now, when speaking of her child, she grew excited, her manner changed, and after a few moment's pause, she broke out into a strain of wild fervour, and exclaimed—

"Oh, my child, my child!—my dear angel!—my lost and abandoned one!—my only treasure! Oh, restore it me—let me once more clasp it in my arms, let me once more see the smile that is treasured in my heart, and bonds, and blows, and cruelty are welcome. They called me mad, because I raved for my child—what should a mother rave for but the presence of her darling cherub. It was mine, and mine only—I wept over it—blessed it—bore it with me in sorrow and suffering, and its innocent and beautiful presence was my only happiness. Give it me back, it was stolen—cruelly and basely

stolen—robbed of a mother's love—robbed of a mother's nurture—what must it have suffered when torn from me!—Oh God! its cries were in my ears night and day!—I heard it—I sought for it—I called for it—and—and—they called me mad!" And here she burst into tears, whilst Scarsbrook could hardly repress his emotions.

It was at this precise point she had broken down before, and again all his soothing was required, to temper the vehemence of her agitation; for a time, indeed, it was unavailing, as she wept and wrung her hands, as if in the very extremity of anguish.

"Give me my child!—I hear it now—hark! hark! Oh, have pity on a mother's grief!"—were the exclamations she uttered, looking as if she feared something, and speaking, though quick and hurriedly, in a low and subdued voice.

After a while she became calmer, and attended to the baronet's queries as to the fate of the child.

"Lost—lost—lost. Oh, I know not where it was removed, but its cries rung in my ears without ceasing. But you are a kind and good man, and you will not lock me up and punish me—Oh, it was a dreadful cruelty to chain up a mother weeping for her child—oh, no! do not send me back to that wicked place!"—she whispered with horrible distinctness, coming close up to him, and getting hold of his arm.—"Oh! do not send me there, or I shall hate you like I hated him—I only raved for my child and he called me mad!"

It seemed in vain to press her farther: the wild light of insanity shone from her eyes, and Scarsbrook, shocked and distressed, had some difficulty in persuading her, that she would be perfectly unmolested, and have every thing she wanted, and go where she chose.

As far as he could judge of her state of mind, she seemed to be deranged on this particular topic,

and this only; the difficulty this placed in the way of his inquiry, threatened to be insuperable, as it was impossible to know how far her statements were worthy of credit.

The marquis on learning the result of this second interview appeared greatly relieved. Her condition, however pitiable, calmed a host of present fears, and the baronet thought he detected some remnants of that selfishness, which had at one time formed the distinguishing trait of his mind; he anxiously pressed him to pursue his investigation determinedly, in order that the strange story of the child might be unravelled, at the same time expressing his opinion, that although a child might exist, or at all events might have been born to her, it would require strong proofs of legitimacy to make it his heir.

"I must confess, Scarsbrook," said the marquis, "that since we have grappled with the threatened evil, since we have tested my superstitious and overwrought fears, I have been relieved of misery. It is strange that the incoherent ravings of a maniac, should have so completely paralysed my energies, and robbed me of peace of mind."

"No, my lord, it arose from vividly calling to your mind, acts of injustice, and pointing out certain natural consequences threatening your present relations; I rejoice as greatly as your lordship, that this unhappy creature's state of mind, and certain hints, which she has already thrown out, may relieve your lordship from consequences, which might possibly have brought you before the public, in no very enviable light, and invaded your domestic peace, so as to have robbed you of the most treasured possessions. But still much remains to be done for this woman, and I am inclined to think there is some foundation for the story of the child. All is so consistent and coherent up to that period,

that I see no reason to doubt her accuracy,—as you remark nothing but the clearest evidence, would be sufficient to establish the paternity of the child, should it be found, of which I see not the remotest probability."

"Nor I—the whole affair indeed begins to assume a different aspect; I am not disposed to deny the identity of this person with Agnes Raymond, though I confess there might be reasonable ground for doubt—but what does the admission amount to? there is an entire absence of all documentary evidence; however, I am exceedingly desirous, that the whole story should be carefully looked into,—I have been frightened by shadows," he concluded, "which your unprejudiced judgment my friend, has dispelled."

Scarsbrook was not altogether satisfied with the bearing of his noble friend—it was gratifying, however, to see the marchioness rapidly recover her cheerfulness and beauty, for she had felt deeply and acutely her lord's change of manner, and she felt no less deeply his restoration to peace and comfort; she knew not why or wherefore these changes had been—she was content that they were passed.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Affliction may subdue the cheek,
But not take in the mind."

Winter's Tale.

The excitement in the mind of the unhappy Agnes Raymond, in place of decreasing, after the conversation last mentioned, continued to increase for several days, and to such lengths did it go, that James Ward and a powerful female domestic were obliged to be placed near her. Her deranged frame of mind brought on a series of fits, and the whole house was thrown into alarm, by her cries and lamentations. Spite of every precaution, the wild and piercing exclamations of "my child, my child," frequently fell upon the ears of the marchioness and Lady Scarsbrook, and their sympathies were so warmly roused, that both insisted upon ministering to her wants. His lordship and Scarsbrook, after vainly combating their wishes, were obliged to yield, and accompanied by the latter, the ladies entered the apartment of the suffering woman. She looked greatly exhausted, but was in one of her calm moods, and acknowledged the presence of her visitors, with a propriety of demeanor that forcibly struck both the ladies. They had considered her as some poor outcast, thrown off from decent society by misfortune, and were not prepared for the superior manner in which she received them.

"I have been ill, very ill," was her answer to the baronet's inquiry, "but I bless God, I am better. Oh! I said you were a noble and generous man, and would not send me back to prison. I es-

caped, by a miracle, to seek my child, and if I have not found her, I have, at least, found a kind and charitable home. I should die in peace could I once more see my child."

"I trust you will, I am sure we will aid your search, and shall rejoice if it prove successful," said the marchioness.

"I thank you, Lady Swansbeck," answered she, "I am pitied by those I have hated, and I shall soon be better. They are frightful visitations; I thought they were passed, when I escaped, but it may not be; I have nursed my sorrows so long that they will go with me to my grave. But why cloud your bright and calm brow," she continued, turning to Lady Scarsbrook, "why shadow forth evil to you? Alas, time has been, that I too revelled in delights like your own, equally honoured, perhaps equally cherished. It looks now like the memory of a brief dream—and—oh, God—its sad results!—but, no, no,—not to you be the tale told. I am better now, Sir John Scarsbrook, and will continue my story; the vision is past, and I think I can go on rationally.—But come soon, I am low and weak, and anxious that you should know all."

Scarsbrook promised to remain, and after some short time the ladies retired.

"I do not wish to press you to continue your sad history till you are fully recovered from your attack. You speak of confinement, of ill-treatment —where did this happen?—Tell me, and it shall be fully inquired into."

"I am not afraid to tell you—I dare trust you; it was at a dreadful place kept by Dr. Mackey, near London. They carried me there after robbing me of my child—and they said I was mad, because I heard it cry and scream for its mother. Years and years must have passed there, I had no record

of the flight of time, save day and night, and the occasional crying of my child."

"And how came you to be incarcerated there—and who deprived you of your child?"

"Ask me not—ask me not—and yet why be silent—the wretch who betrayed me, who stole my child, may yet live, and may be brought to justice—and d'Harcourt may give me my child. You say that he has it not;—how is it then, that since I saw him, I have felt sure I was near it—that I have heard it constantly. Oh, it must be here, in pity's name give it me!"

Sir John, fearing that she would run off into the same strain of lamentations, which had twice before interrupted her narrative, said—

"But Dr. Mackay,—did he treat you harshly?"

"Oh, dreadfully, dreadfully;—blows and chains, and dark rooms, and worse, worse than that."

"Well," he said, "I will see after this Dr. Mackay, meantime keep yourself quiet and composed. and my own medical man shall continue to attend you if you wish it."

"I thank you,—no, I shall be better soon; I am safe here, and only want rest. But where is d'Harcourt, he has nothing now to fear from me. I have been wicked, very wicked, I would have slain him at one time, but he is the father of my child. Let him come and hear me say I forgive him, notwithstanding the ruin he has brought upon me; kindness has made me what I once was, it has softened my heart, and if I could see my child, I should die in peace."

"Let us hope it may be so, you are amongst friends who will spare no efforts to do justice to you."

The pertinacity of the woman regarding her child determined Swansbeck to make an instant visit to London, in order to learn from Dr. Mac-

kay, a name not unknown to him, as the keeper of a large establishment for the reception and treatment of insane persons, leaving the marchioness in the care of his friends.

A rapid journey soon placed him on the Doctor's threshold, who, being apprised of his rank, received him very politely. In answer to his lordship's query, as to whether he had a patient in his house of the name of Agnes Raymond, he answered—

"Fore Gad, my lord, I have not; I had such an one, but she took to flight some time ago, and what's become of her nobody knows. I trust your lordship is some remote connection of the woman's, for her scoundrelly husband is lately missing, sadly in my debt."

"No, still it is possible I might be induced to liquidate your claim, I have heard some part of her story, what do you know about her?"

"Very little, nay, I may say, nothing, my lord, except that her's was a case of regular lunacy and as certainly as the full moon came, the straight waistcoat, and belladonna, were her portion, and thus for the last fifteen or sixteen years. She was rational enough at times, and when she first came here was an uncommonly fine woman, but our regimen has broken her up sadly. She used to rave about a child, though I suppose it was illusion, her husband declaring that he knew nothing about any child. He is, however, a precious rascal, I know him well, or I should never have got a penny out of him, after he had once placed her under my roof."

"Who is he, or what is he?"

"Hum! ha!—In truth, my lord, it is a ticklish question. He has had many names, and for a rascal, has pulled through the world pretty well:—but, excuse me my lord, men placed in my delicate

and responsible situation require the tongue of Harpocrates;—family secrets come into our keeping, and we never know all the ins and outs of a case. I really wou'd rather not tell you who is the husband, or reputed husband of Agnes Raymond, of whom, by the by, the world is well quit, as the fellow has absconded, I am told."

"Your prudential caution is praiseworthy, I perhaps know the man."

"I rather think not, my lord, you are a step above his game; but he is pretty extensively known at the West End."

"Then, if I understand you rightly, your knowledge of the unfortunate woman extends no farther, than the facts of her admission into your establishment, her residence with you for years, and, finally, her escape from you, facts which you can of course verify, and that her derangement seemed to hinge on the fate of her child."

"Just so, my lord, she was 'mens sana' on other points, and was allowed considerable liberty, and made herself useful in the house. As to her husband, why if the fellow be really gone, and your lordship is anxious to know any thing of him, if you will write me, I will let you know all about him. But he has been too useful a man to me, to be sent down the stream on the first rough breeze. He's a cunning dog, and may only have doubled for a while;—would your lordship choose to take a turn round my establishment, which is, I believe. as perfect in its discipline as such a place well can be."

His lordship declined the honour, he shuddered, when he got again into his carriage, at the idea of any human being spending life under the unchecked control of a man like Mackay, whose coarse expression, and levity of tone showed a hard and callous mind. It was painful to think of all the

indignities, the cruelties, and the barbarities that might be practised in such a place, when the ready answer was that the details of the most shocking treatment were the mere cunning invention of the complainer; this removed all responsibility—and his mind revolted in sickening horror, when he thought that Agnes Raymond, the proud and the beautiful, had been shut up in that den of human misery and degradation, exposed to all the tender mercies of its brutal keepers.

This stirred within him a more correct sense of the treatment Agnes Raymond had received. He had laid "the flattering unction to his soul" that their original faults had been equal—and when he had recovered from the first shock, which the knowledge of her existence had given him, he had sedulously striven to work himself into the belief, that her fate had been the natural result of her own pride, and obstinacy—and that it was his duty to himself, and his lovely and innocent wife, to hide from the world all trace of the connexion between the wealthy and powerful nobleman and a degraded being—the relic of her whom he had chosen as his brightest gem, when her beauty was at its zenith. This belief had been strengthened since her aberration of intellect had become known, and whatever moral or legal claims she might have upon him he would, had it not been for the remonstrances of Scarsbrook, have sacrificed them to his personal comfort; not that he would have had her harshly or ignominiously treated: no, from that his disposition would have saved her, but he would have taken advantage of her condition, and have placed her under careful but strict surveillance, in an abode similar to the one he had just been visiting.

What little he had seen of it, and of its master, convinced him, that to a creature not irreclaimably

and permanently insane, it must be a very hell. When the mind is totally eclipsed, when its faculties and powers are overthrown, however humanity may shudder at the thought of a fellow creature being condemned to so cruel a lot, regard for the interests of society may render it desirable, nay indispensable; but in other cases, where reason at intervals resumes her sway, and when, consequently, a hope remains that the dark cloud may roll away, the very idea is horrible,—and so the marquis felt, and he determined to have Agnes Raymond watched over in some asylum more suited to her sex and her condition.

CHAPTER XIV.

"———a villain
And singular in his art."

Cymbeline.

On reaching Vale Hall on the fourth day after his departure, he found that the object, on whose account he had been absent, was considerably weaker, and had been quite free from all symptoms of mental failing. It seemed, however, as if, now that her mind was settling down into calmness, and into perfect understanding that her bodily powers would fail—the stimulant which had borne her up, through so much suffering and sorrow, was the over-wrought power of disordered intellect, and now, when kindness and attention, and a disposition to sooth her peculiar wishes, surrounded her, her energies weakened and decayed.

From all appearances, Scarsbrook was of opinion that her existence would not long be a cause of uneasiness to his noble friend, and if he deplored her past career, it was some consolation to know, that her last hours would be carefully and kindly watched over. The sufferings, the wear and tear of system during confinement, the privations and toil she had undergone since her escape, had indeed been too much for her powers of endurance, and she was slowly, but certainly sinking into a premature grave.

Scarsbrook held repeated conversations with her, and as her mind cleared she no longer yielded to her paroxysm of sorrow. It was quite obvious to

him from all he learnt, that a child had been born, under circumstances which made it probable that the marquis had been a father,—then followed a train of events, weak, if not criminal on her part, ending with the abstraction or destruction of the infant, and her own derangement and confinement. All this was distinct and clear, but it afforded no clue to the absolute fate of the child, and she still either hesitated, or did not think it needful, to give the name of the man who had betrayed her a second time. Scarsbrook was unwilling to press her, choosing rather to wait for the voluntary disentanglement of her ideas.

She was frequently visited both by the marchioness and Lady Scarsbrook, who treated her with the greatest kindness; this made a very sensible impression on her, and as she always forebore allusion to her connexions with the marquis, no restraint was laid upon their seeing her beyond Scarsbrook's presence. As the mists of derangement rolled from her mind, and as feminine sympathy opened her heart, many of the nobler and purer traits of her original character began to show themselves, through the rank growth of coarse and evil passions, which had been generated by her bitter experience. The ladies were occasionally surprised into inquiries, when her observations indicated a knowledge of society, totally inconsistent with her present dependent state, they were however, easily parried by Scarsbrook, neither did her continued residence at the hall, excite any surmises, either on their part, or on the part of his domestics—charitable and humane conduct upon a noble scale, having ever been one of the characteristics of the family, and hospitals and dispensaries were not then as now, the receivers-general of every distressed being, which was compelled to throw itself on the kindness of its fellows.

The party at the hall was now increased by the addition of Lord and Lady Haggerton, and the Duke of Eversfield; the latter was too much a man of the world to recall to mind his past knowledge of the foundling. Time flew pleasantly, and arrangements were talked of for the London season. This concourse of friends naturally withdrew some attention from Agnes Raymond, till the marquis received a letter from Dr. Mackay, announcing that he was ready to give up the name of the party, after whom he had inquired, in reference to an escaped inmate of his house, provided he was still anxious on the subject; to this his lordship replied, that it would still be deemed useful, and in a day or two, he received the following pithy epistle from the worthy disciple of Esculapius:

"My Lord,

"May it please your lordship, the individual after whom you have been inquiring, is a fellow who has had as many alias's to his name as the notorious Captain Black, of swindling celebrity, his present style and title is Monsieur Deidamer, and he is now in 'durance vile,' for some real or alleged conspiracy, or robbing, or something of that sort, practised against a country booby, who, on coming to see the 'sights' of London, was caught by this Tartar. If the unfortunate woman who escaped from my keeping, should prove to be some one in whom your lordship is interested, I trust, my lord, that your lordship will not forget the balance unsettled by the soi disant Monsieur Deidamer.

"I have, my lord, the honour to be,

"your lorship's very humble servant,

"Alexander Mackay."

A—— House.

On the recept of this letter, Sir John Scarsbrook immediately waited on Agnes Raymond, and briefly but pointedly informed her of its contents, saying that he hoped she would furnish him with such farther information, as might enable him to bring the man who had so cruelly abused her to punishment.

"I thank God for this! I had feared I should die before the disclosure was made,—and now,—now I shall find my child," was her answer. "It wrings the confession from me of my evil doing; repentance and bitter remorse and madness were its fruit. I have been struggling for several days to bring myself to detail to you this portion of my life, but shame has kept me silent. This providential letter opens the path, and God grant that it may lead to the recovery of my child.

"I had laboured with a light heart for several weeks, and my beautiful child was daily becoming dearer and dearer to me; already I believed it loved and recognized me, that its little arms opened more willingly to me than to others; that smiles mantled its features more frequently when with me that when with others; that it crept more closely to me, and that it was beginning to know a mother's smile and kiss.

"It was at this time that a man took refuge in the obscure court in which I lived, and I became the object of his attentions. My person had regained some of its former appearances, and tempted by this and by my too obvious poverty, he assailed me by regards, which for a period I repulsed resolutely. But a mother's heart my be touched in one point, and this point he discovered.

"I was forced to be absent much from my humble apartment, and forced also to leave behind me my infant. He had nothing to do, he obtruded himself into my room, played with and nursed my

innocent, till it knew him, and was pleased to be with him. This softened me towards him, the woman who had charge of it was occupied like myself, and very willingly consigned her charge to any body who would tend it; and hence it generally happened, that on my return, I received the smiling and happy child from his arms.

"By degrees this led to familiarity and even kindness, for, in addition to this, he generously contributed to my wants, and forced upon my acceptance many little articles of comfort, to which, though I had now been for some time a stranger, I had not lost the relish for, and my naked and forlorn apartments assumed, by his continued presents, an appearance of neatness, of which I felt proud.

"It was to my child, however, that his attentions were most unremitting, and it was by this means that he gained influence over me. His statements relative to himself were sufficiently plausible; I was poor, and, in an evil hour I listened to his language of attachment. But I listened long, his arguments were base and personal, they applied however to my condition; and if they made no impression on my heart, experience opened a way for them to my reason.

"Who or what was I?—a nameless and proscribed creature, a wretch shut out from all but the most degraded of my kind, and now tempted by one professing love for me to resume a decent rank in society, as he swore most solemnly, and placed in my hands documents to show that such was his proper position. I should have probably escaped his snares, and some portion of my future misery, had not my child fallen ill; his tenderness supplied all its wants, both medical and dietary, and I was won over to think him worthy of my regards. I must have been blinded by want, and utterly bewildered by circumstances. I sinned,

but I sinned under the sanction of a surreptitious union. I left, after a time, as the nominal wife of this man, the miserable neighbourhood where I had known the extreme of wo—and the first dawning of happiness in the person of my beloved child.

"A very brief intercourse showed me that my husband was a man of profligate habits, and that his statements as to his affairs were at variance with truth; the life he led was most abandoned, and he expected that I should enter fully into his licentious courses. Daily, as I clasped my child to my breast, did I sorrow for my imprudence, I had escaped from poverty to share the wages of a a gambler, and a spendthrift, and, what was worse, to be threatened with a kind of life most hateful and abhorrent to a woman's soul; I had not lost my self-respect; I was subjected to a series of importunities by his companions in profligacy, and I now learnt to loathe him; he laughed and sneered at our union, and in the end, treated my beautiful and inoffensive child with harshness. His purposes were served he told me—and he would not be tormented with its occasional fretfulness—God! how his unkindness made me love it—I clung to it, as my only comfort—I nursed it, and watched it with nervous anxiety; and when he threatened to deprive me of it, a mother's fierceness was roused within me, and I guarded it and would have died in its defence.

"For some time, the state of things continued every day rendering my condition more and more unhappy—my health suffered, and I became fearful and timid, and never suffered my child to be a moment out of my sight—till one unhappy day, his positive command, seconded by something like violence, forced me to accompany him a short distance from town; I was in an agony of uneasiness; I pictured my absent innocent, till I worked myself

up into a state of agitation, that could no longer be controulled, and setting his wishes and commands at defiance, I left him to return home. I arrived there, rushed into my darling s room, and it was empty; I sought the house from side to side—I called upon its name—I implored our only domestic, to tell me where it was—I could get no information from her—it was gone, I felt it was gone—I knew I had been robbed of it, and I beat my breast and tore my hair in utter distraction. In the midst of my despair the villain arrived, and as he thanked God for its removal, I rushed upon him and demanded my child—and I was struck senseless."

Here a long fit of weeping interrupted the woman's narrative, but after it subsided she resumed as follows—

"Oh! the horrible and dreadful days that followed!—I raved—I prayed for my child—my very heart was bursting with desire to behold it—I offered life, honour, all—all for one sight of it. Brutal indignity, savage mockery, and close imprisonment were my answer—all the rest is a vague and fearful dream of violence and suffering—till I found myself slowly gaining consciousness and strength in Dr. Mackay's establishment. But there, time after time, the sense of my loss overpowered me, the treatment I had received must have warped my mind, and they called me mad, and as such treated me.

"Mad I might have been, and would to God my madness had been complete—would to God that all mental and moral perception had been lost. But it was not so, the man and Mackay, and their vile companions called me a poor lunatic—but ask me no more, my soul loathes the memory—I curse the fiends that abused me, and even my hardened brow burns with shame. I escaped; my mind, for

a time was chaos; I wandered far away till the sense of liberty roused me into recollection: and by dint of begging and assuming a gipsy dress, I prowled about London safely.

"My first visit was to the neighbourhood from whence my child had been stolen; it was changed, and no such a person as I spoke of was remembered as having resided there. I had been shut from the world, and I came back into it with the same feelings with which I had quitted it—all else was changed. I sought out the proud mansion of Trevor d'Harcourt—that still stood—I gained access to its interior, by ministering to the folues of the domestics; and I again, after the lapse of years, saw him who had been the original cause of my ruin: saw him high in rank and station—saw him cherishing another wife—and I thought of his child.

"My heart swelled, had I been near him, I should have rushed into his presence. I followed his steps—I traced him in his journies—I suffered many hardships—and I began to vow vengeance against him. I met him- I taun d him—I theatened him. I saw the bloo forsa his cheeks, and I felt I had him in my power. I asked for my child, his sight stirred in me strange emotions; and I feared I was again mad—if it be madness never to forget a mother's woes.

"You know the rest, my fi have returned, but they are now gone for ever. Slowly and dimly my memories have risen up within me, till now they have assumed shape and consistency. I look back on a long series of dreadful barbarities, and my heart rests upon my child and my husband. I have seen the one, may God grant that I may see the ther. He, the Author of all Good, has chastened my spirit—I would not injure him, I would not disturb the happiness of his

lovely companion. I am no longer fit to take up my station beside him. I have been too familiar with all that is wretched and vicious to place myself side by side with those pure beings who have never lived out of their proper sphere.

"The wretched man who completed my ruin, I have no doubt put my blessed child out of my keeping! but I feel assured that it lives, but where and how is known only to One—and He will, I trust, now bring it to light."

"Your story is indeed a dark and a sad one, and I trust with you, that this man's delinquency will prove the dawn of a happier day for you. His actions shall be most thoroughly examined into, and I would fain hope that his present condition will be the means taken by providence to restore you your lost child, as well as punishing him for his barbarous treatment of you. No pains shall be spared to bring the truth to light: I will myself go to town, and make every necessary inquiry, for which purpose we will reduce your narrative to writing.

"May God bless you, Sir John Scarsbrook, and may your errand of mercy prosper! then I shall die contented and in peace, satisfied by knowing, that my child will have a careful and honourable protector. May her fate be happier than mine."

Two days were spent in the society of his noble guests, and in making such memoranda, as to dates and circumstances, as would enable him to test the accuracy of the man's statements, provided he were disposed to make any; and on the third day after the receipt of Dr. Mackay's communication, Scarsbrook left Vale Hall, in his travelling carriage, for town, being the first time he had been separated from his wife since their union.

CHAPTER XV.

"Eventus stultorum magister."

Fab.

The last time the reader saw Sir John Manford was when returning from his bankers, after having ascertained that he had been, by some strange jugglement, robbed of no small sum of money. He would gladly have kept this loss to himself, but its mysterious abstraction so weighed upon his mind, that on arriving at Factory Hall, his wife and mother, his usual advisers, were made acquainted with the transaction.

"The Lord be gracious to us," exclaimed the old lady, "the Lord be gracious to us!—It's well thou'rt so rich, Johnny, or we should have been clean ruinated!"

"Why John," said his wife, "I didna think thee had been such a fool as that lad. But prithee how did it happen. It seems mighty curious to me."

Now Manford's cogitations had already resolved themselves into a tolerably clear idea of the when, the where, and the how the check had been signed —and this was during his fit of intoxication, at the house of the friend of Helen's husband, that of Monsieur Deidamer. It was not unusual in the orgies of himself and his brother manufacturers, who had rapidly risen to affluence, to boast of their gains, and as vouchers for these boasts, sign checks

for large amounts. These signatures were amongst their frolics, and led to no further evils than the waste of the paper on which they were written. It was a species of boasting peculiar to the people, but it had been carefully watched by Count Hartmann, whose notions of the wealth of these sons of trade had partly been formed, from seeing how familiarly thousands and tens of thousands were thus thrown backwards and forwards.

Manford's shrewd sense soon convinced him, that this prank had been practised in London, when in his cups, and that, however safe it might be in the country and amongst his own set of acquaintances, it was something more than a joke in other places. This explanation, though probable and obvious, hardly satisfied his wife.

"I don't know, John, it's mighty curious how thee could sign away ten thousand pounds that way. Why didna the count take care of thee—or why couldna thee keep thyself sober?"

"Why thee sees, Nancy, it's very easy now to see that I've made a fool of myself. And as for that count, why it's my belief he's no great things after all. But it's no use making a piece of work about it here; I'm determined to be off again to London, and see these chaps."

"If thee goes, John, I go too," said his wife, "thou'rt not fit to be trusted in London; just see what a fool they made thee when there was no body with thee. I will go," she continued, seeing a negative expression in Manford's face, "so don't thee say a word John."

Manford, who knew his wife's moral temperament too well to think of standing in her way, when she assumed a decided and dogmatical tone, acquiesced with the best grace he could command. He also called to his councils his brother Thomas,

the father of the countess, for although unwilling to charge the count with being a party concerned in the swindle, he nevertheless strongly suspected him. Thomas Manford listened to his statement with no small surprise.

"Thou must have given that cheque, John, in some wagering way I should think, as I'll ne'er believe they would have taken it. It's worth seeing after, however, and the count may, perhaps help thee out of the scrape."

"Hum—Thomas,—perhaps he may,—but we'll see. Just go to Manchester for me, and get me the number of the notes, and the description of the fellow that got it cashed, and ask 'em how I had best proceed."

"Well, I'll do that," was the answer, "and I don't know if I wont go to London, too,—Nelly does na seem right, and I've a curiosity to see her."

"Just as thee likes, Thomas, for that, only don't take thy wife. Mine will go, but she'll be quite enough of the womankind for us."

"Well, well, I must see if I can contrive it," and so the brothers parted; Sir John to attend to his business affairs, and to arrange for his second and unwonted absence.

Thomas Manford found means to satisfy his wife, that her presence at home would be best for her during his projected journey, and a week after Sir John Manford had quitted London, he was again within its precincts.

The first step of the party was, very naturally, to proceed towards Baker street, intending to do miciliate themselves, in a family way, with the countess. Thomas Manford was much struck with the appearance of the town, and as they were set down at a given number in the street, said, he little

thought that a child of his would ever have lived in such a place.

"Well, here we are," said Sir John, "I've a notion they'll be rather surprised."

"Dear-a-me, I am glad," re-echoed Mrs. Manford, "for I'm terribly tired, and want my tea; I wonder what Helen will say."

Whilst the chaise-driver was assisting Mrs. Manford, stiff and sore with her long ride, to descend, Manford advanced to the door of No. 44, nor was it till he had pulled lustily at the bell, that he became aware of certain appearances about the exterior, indicative of an untenanted mansion. He looked at the windows, and, greatly to his astonishment, beheld a placard, with the announcement —"This house to let, apply at No. 13, Threadneedle street, city."

"Hey-day!" exclaimed he, stepping back, "how's this," and the trio stood in blank astonishment, gazing upwards at the tiers of shuttered windows.

"God be gracious to me!" said Mrs. Manford, "how's this?"

"Lord bless us!" said Manford, the father, "what's become of 'em."

This interjectional conversation was broken in upon, by the driver asking for his fare.

"Stop a bit my lad, perhaps we shall want a lift somewhere else," was Sir John's reply.

"Shall I ring the 'ary' bell, Sir," asked the driver, "may be there's somebody below."

"Yes, ring away."

The noisy peal, however, brought no answer, and an application at the next door produced no result, beyond a vague reply, that they knew nothing about No. 44.

"Well," said Mrs. Manford, "that's queer at any

rate! not to know nothing of their next door neighbour. London's a queer place."

Nothing, therefore, remained for the party, but to carry themselves and their surmises back to the inn, and to seek for their tea and their home some where else, than under the roof of Count Hartmann.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Nil fuit unquam sic impar sibi."

Amongst other documents furnished to Manford, by his Manchester bankers, was the name and address of a lawyer, skilled in all infractions of the "lex pecuniæ." To this gentlemen Sir John addressed himself, and, after a brief consultation, a couple of well-trained and active disciples of Jonathan Wild, were in the office, to hear from him the particulars of the affair, for the unravelling of which their services were deemed needful.

Greatly to the astonishment of the Manfords, no sooner had these officials heard the name and residence of Deidamer, than one of them eyeing the other with a knowing obliquity of vision, said—

"Aye, aye, a regular trap."

"Why do you know any thing about that chap," asked Thomas Manford."

"Aye, aye, sir, we've been on the look out for him a good while—but he's a sharp 'un."

"A sharp 'un!—what does thee mean by that?"

"Oh, a regular long-headed fellow, up to every thing, and not to be caught with chaff."

"What you mean to say he's a rascal, I suppose."

"That's it, sir, exactly, I'll uphold him to be as great a rascal as any man in London."

"Well, and what's his friend Count Hartmann? as you seem to know so much of the one, you may perhaps know something about the other."

"Birds of a feather—birds of a feather, not a

pin to choose, only the count's somewhat more of a fool."

"In God's name, what are they," exclaimed Manford.

"Why, you see, sir, its not just so easy to say what they be, they're gentlemen in a way, Deidamer's a real clever fellow, and one of the steadiest of the gambling house keepers, and Hartman as he calls himself, why I don't know what to call him, he's a sort of hanger on of late at Deidamer's."

"Well then, how are we to get hold of em? Not much chance of doing any good, perhaps, but we must try. At any rate it's of great consequence that we should know what sort of a fist this count is that we've caught," said Sir John Manford, turning to his brother.

"That it is; we seem to have bought a pig in a poke, and paid to some tune for him."

Summonses were issued for the apprehension of Deidamer, and some confederates, on the deposition of Manford, and the two Bow-street jackalls set off on their quest.

When Mrs. Manford was made acquainted with the character of the count, she raised her hands and eyes, and exclaimed—

"Oh Lord! oh Lord! what will become of poor Nelly. Oh, what a rascal—what fools we've been to be sure."

"Aye, Nancy, we're regularly done by this foreigner, I've a notion. Twenty-five thousand pounds at a blow; we've paid the piper to some purpose."

After a brief absence, the "officials" returned, reporting that Deidamer was "non est inventus." This led to a still farther wonder and consternation; and the manufacturers declared themselves perfectly non-plussed. Instructions were, however, given for an active inquiry, and, as nothing farther

could be done, the aggrieved parties thought of turning homewards, the disappointment having completely quelled their disposition for sight seeing. Mrs. Manford expressed herself quite disgusted with Londoners, and declared, very emphatically, that she should be careful, in future, in admitting them to Factory Hall.

In this state of mind the wealthy plebeians remained till the following morning, having resolved to remove themselves to the country during the day.

CHAPTER XVII.

"How full of briars is this working day world."
Shakspeare.

The adage of "honour amongst thieves," sometimes meets with a notable exemplification, in a very natural piece of villany. That thieves 'are very honourable men amongst themselves may be true, but men, whose minds are sunk in moral guilt, must have loose conceptions of the terms "meum et tuum." Count Hartmann had lately had this truth illustrated to him in the most striking manner.

The trick which had deprived Sir John Manford of his cheque, had been sanctioned by his worthy relative, in so far that he had led him on to do that which Hartmann knew him to be in the habit of doing, and this with an understanding, that a certain share of the proceeds were to be paid to him for his connivance. No sooner, therefore, had the "deed been done,' than Deidamer posted off to Manchester, and by dint of rapid travelling had secured his money on the following evening. An equally rapid journey brought him back to town, and instant arrangements were made for a removal.

He had, since Hartmann's return, sedulously cultivated him, and with the aid of his female friend, had contrived to win over the besotted count; and a considerable portion of his wife's fortune, as it has been already hinted, had passed into his bank. Now this large accumulation, and the cash he had procured from Manford's care-

lessness, appeared to form an admirable opportunity for a cunning stroke of policy; and he came to the very honourable resolution of appropriating these moneys to his sole use and profit, and to quit England. No hint of this sort escaped him, on the contrary, it was essential, that Hartmann should be kept quiet, till he was fairly out of the way; and for this purpose, he made no opposition to his joining in his excursion.

The count's faculties were not so obtuse but that he could see the prudence of Deidamer's temporary absence, till Manford had digested and fully recovered from his shock: and he also felt that it would, on the whole, be advisable to remove himself for a space. Of all this scheming the countess was, of course, in utter ignorance, and she had accompanied her husband on his tour, expecting a change of scene and perhaps some amusement.

It has been already made known, that a furious feud speedily disturbed the harmony of the party. Hartmann wanted his division of the spoil, and this Deidamer steadily declined giving, till an explosion took place, and the countess was condemned to witness her husband transformed into a wild beast, by his angry and fierce passions. Her situation on board the vessel was miserable; Hartmann's rage knew no bounds, and the recriminations that passed between him and Deidamer opened to her a history of villany of which she could comprehend only a part; but it was sufficient to show her into what hands she had fallen. La belle Julie also showed her true colours, and Helen's womanly pride was abundantly shocked by all she heard and saw.

It had been Deidamer's plan to have landed his "friends" either at Guernsey or Jersey, as might have been most convenient; and then to have proceeded with his booty to the continent. The ves-

sel in which they were embarked was one of those active traders—half smuggler, half frigate,—that carried on the immense contraband traffic between England and the rest of Europe, During the war. Bad weather, however, impeded their course, and this brought out also a swarm of French privateers, and the captain deemed it prudent to alter his course.

After several days, spent on board, the passengers were landed at Southampton, Deidamer looking anxiously out for another conveyance, and the count as anxiously to bring him to terms. Failing in this, he resolved to denounce him, forgetting that his own hands were any thing but pure. Deidamer, however, proved above his match, and seeing no immediate chance of getting away he returned to town, trusting to his own resources to keep out of harm's way, and firmly resolved to retain the count's money.

It thus happened that the aggrieved and the aggrieving parties arrived in London, nearly at the same time. The countess, from fatigue and terror, had suffered dreadfully; and whatever was the consequence she determined to return home, the count's conduct having filled her with disgust. In her present state, however, it was impossible, and she was settled in a second rate hotel, to recruit, whilst her husband was unceasing in his vituperations and vows of vengeance, and commenced active operations against Deidamer.

On the morning of the day on which the Manfords had fixed to leave London, they were suddenly broken in upon by the count, in propriâ personâ, accompanied by one of the "legal guardians," who had been out in quest of him and his friend.

"Hah, mine dear father-in-law, and mine worthy Sir John, and mine dear Mrs. Manford, how

much gladness is this. I been robbed—you been robbed, by one great villain."

His reception was any thing but cordial; a heavy gloom sat on Sir John's brow as he answered—

"May be, count, may be, we shall soon see that. Where's your friend Deidamer?"

"Hah, mine dear Sir John, no friend, but a great villain."

"It's a pity but you'd told us that sooner,—but where's Helen?" said the father.

'Hah! mine poor wife; she has the sickness at mine hotel."

"And where is this hotel?" said Mrs. John Manford, "it's my opinion you have used her shamefully—poor Nelly has not been used to your foreign ways, count. But let me know where she is, that I may take her a bit of comfort, poor lass."

The necessary information having been given. Manford, the father, and Mrs. John Manford proceeded forthwith to the place indicated, leaving Sir John and the count to fight their own battles.

The countess had, indeed, need of "a bit of comfort," as her aunt named it. Agitation of mind and fatigue of body having preyed severely upon her, and she was labouring under a severe attack of nervous fever. Her friends were shocked at her changed and wretched appearance; Mrs. Manford, a woman of sensibility, in her own way, and upon peculiar occasions, was loud in her expressions of kindness and commiseration; and the father sat down beside his sick and unhappy child, and mentally compared the blooming girl, who had lately left his home, as the flower of his flock, and the wo worn and weeping creature before him.

"Od rabbit him, Nelly," he said, taking her burning hand in his, "od rabbit him, but thee shall

go thy ways home wi' us, and we'll have no more to do wi' him."

"That thee shall—oh, what a scant o' grace he must be, to be sure. But do tell us all about it," Mrs. Manford continued, her feminine curiosity prevailing over her sorrow.

"No, no, not now, Nancy," said the more prudent father, "let her have a little rest, she seems sadly broken down."

"Oh, aunt, don't leave me, I shall soon be better; and if I could but get down home again, I should feel comfortable."

"No, no, I won't leave thee,—but wherever has thee been.

Manford seeing there was no help for a gossipping discourse, thought it best to leave them to themselves. He ascertained that the house was decent and respectable, and having procured the aid of a medical man, and made arrangements for establishing their own quarters there, he went in search of his brother, Sir John.

A few home questions brought out a part of the truth respecting the entertainment at Deidamer's, and its consequences. The count, however, declared very solemnly that his late friend was "one great swindler," but as for himself, "he was one great honest man."

This conclusion the Manfords very reasonably doubted, and therefore kept a watchful eye upon his motions, availing themselves of his exasperation against his confrére, to secure him in order to bring out the whole truth. As to the recovery of the money, that appeared a somewhat doubtful matter even in a legal point of view.

CHAPTER XVIII.

——"You must not think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,
That we can let our beard be shook——
And think it pastime."

Shakspeare.

For several days after the return of Count Hartmann, his wife continued in a very critical state, and serious apprehensions were entertained for her life. She raved incessantly about home and her sisters, and in the hope of quieting her uneasiness a hasty summons was despatched into the country, and on the third day, her mother and two of her daughters arrived in London; their presence seemed to afford her relief, and her condition effectually removed every trace of the foolish quarrel which had, to some very considerable extent, led to the catastrophe.

Whilst their attention and sympathy was thus vividly directed towards her, the vigilance and activity of their two assistant officials suffered no abatement, and Deidamer having, at length, made his own arrangements, suffered himself to be apprehended. The charge against him appeared simple and easy enough to pronounce judgment upon; but, nevertheless, it was difficult to bring home to him any precise and definite infraction of the law, and it was thought necessary to make Hartmann a party in a conspiracy to defraud Sir John Manford.

The innate baseness of the man shone forth abundantly during all these proceedings; he was

alike incapable of shame or sense of guilt, even when his collusive dealings were fully acknowledged, he treated the whole affair as an excellent jest, played upon the long purses "of his wife's famille." Not so the manufacturers, any thing but this they might have forgiven; with them money was the "visible God," before which they worshipped, and any act tending to injure its shrine was worse than sacrilege.

"He who steals my purse steals trash,"

by no means applied to the contents of the purses of the rich plebeians. Hartmann might have committed almost any other offence with perfect impunity, except the one that his narrow and avaricious mind had stumbled upon. Their conceptions of right and wrong were, of course, something like those of the rest of mankind: but departures from the plain path of honesty and morality were not altogether novelties to themselves, and in a person of the count's supposed rank, it must have been a desperately flagrant crime, that would have sufficed to have made them abandon or discountenance him, had this crime been directed against any body or any thing not connected with themselves. As it was, he had brought into play against him the men, on account of the conspiracy and its successful termination—and on the other the females were furious, partly on account of the robbery, and partly on account of Helen. The regards of the ladies would have aided him materially at this juncture, as women are very decided and tenacious partisans when their fancies are engaged. Hartmann was thus placed as unfavourably with his connexions as can well be imagined. Nothing daunted, however, he grinned and talked as usual, till he was voted a most pes-

tilent fellow; and the party expressed themselves not only tired but ashamed of him.

In fact the plebeians were become aware that in their wish for a titled son-in-law, they had overlooked every other qualification, and as he now stood out before them in his naked meanness and rascality, their pride and self-love suffered many grievous twinges. They had exulted over their neighbours, had talked of the countess, and assumed no small "state and ceremony" in their social circle. Sir John Manford, and a countess united in one family, had naturally made that family the fashionable leaders, amongst a set of people, who could boast of no such adventitious attractions, and now to be stripped like the ass, or magpie of the fable—it stung them home, and in place of blaming their own blindness and precipitancy, they threw the entire onus upon the unlucky count, and they began to wonder what their "Nelly could have seen in the fellow to make her marry him."

After very severe sufferings, which her youth and originally good constitution bore her through, the yet unconscious object of these expressions, began to exhibit some symptoms of amendment. Her delirium moderated—and slowly and feebly the faculties of attention and judgment again displayed themselves. Her rambling and incoherences were now chiefly directed towards her unworthy husband, whom she seemed to remember with perfect horror, and especial pains were taken to keep him out of her sight. Strangely enough this was a task of some difficulty—as he was often prowling about her room, and boring every body with inquiries—after, "his dear wife."

"I'll tell you what, count," Mrs. Manford, the mother, was in the habit of saying to him, "you quite sickens one with your cant about poor Nelly,

I've no notion of a man as can let his wife be used as she's been used, caring a farthing for her, and so, I'll tell you nothing about her."

"Well, but mine dear mother-in-law, I have great affections for mine wife, very great affections indeed, all mine heart is quite full of her, and I do pray you to let me give her one embrace—it would be grand medicine for her."

"She can't abide the thought of your coming near her, I wish she'd never seen you, nor none of us, seeing as how you've turned out such a raffle-ment of a count. For my part, I never see'd much in you. Oh, what a power of mischief you have done to be sure!"

The young ladies treated him with still more indignity. It was remembered as a sore offence against him, that his attentions had been of a very curious kind: when, in the high and palmy condition of a favourite, these had passed muster very well,—they were foreign and new, ergo they were tolerated; now he was avoided, and not a word was bestowed upon him; brows as rigid and cold as ice were ever before him, and looks of contempt and dislike, that would have made men of ordinary feelings very shy of meeting them. Not so the count,—either he was a philosopher of a school of ethics of which he was the founder and sole disciple, and had reasoned himself into the conviction, that the moral sense was an evil, or he had been sent into the world, by nature, divested of this common attribute of humanity. The repulses and rudenesses that he incessantly met, he received without a tittle of embarrassment, and still went about "mine wifing," and "mine dearing," with imperturbable sang froid.

"An evil endured, is an evil cured," is an adage not unfounded in truth and observation: but the

count's endurance was no help to him—his reputation with his quondam admirers was gone. He had injured them in a vital part, and the wound, in place of healing, rankled and festered deeper and deeper, as it became tolerably certain that Sir John Manford's money, and a great portion of the fortune of his wife were irretrievably lost.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind."
Henry Sixth.

Monsieur Deidamer had passed several examinations, which had been gone through on his part, with the most admirable nonchalance, when Sir John Scarsbrook entered the private room of the magistrate, in whose presence the affair was discussed. He had neither seen nor heard any thing of his plebeian neighbours since his marriage, and had not the most distant idea that they were the parties through whose instrumentality the fate of the Marquis of Swansbeck's child was to be unravelled —providing the story of the woman, representing herself to be Agnes Raymond, should bear the test of Deidamer's cross-examination.

Sir John Manford, his brother, and Deidamer were, therefore, at once brought under his notice, and some surprise was expressed by the manufacturers at his unexpected appearance. They seemed not to have forgotten his interference in the case of his own servant, and they eyed him suspiciously, their wise heads being unable to seize upon any other plausible idea to account for his presence, beyond a vague expectation, that he was there for some purpose inimical to their interests.

A few words in private passed between the baronet and the magistrate, and the former was accommodated with a chair till the Manfords should be dismissed.

Sir John Manford, however, after a few hems and ahs, addressed Scarsbrook, thinking apparently, that as he had nothing to do with their affair, he might perhaps be disposed to listen to his story. The baronet received his advances with kindness, and heard his strange adventure from beginning to end. He felt interested indeed in it, relating as it did to a man on whose veracity so much depended: Manford was, therefore, permitted to tell his tale uninterruptedly, and he ended by saying—

"Now is'nt it a curious thing Sir John?"

"Most certainly; and I am sorry to find your relative should have made himself a party in a transaction so dishonourable."

"Why you see, Sir John, there the shoe pinches sorely. It's mighty odd how we were all taken in by him; but the officers and the women-folk had it their own way, and so no wonder we were so confoundedly befooled. As to this chap here, who's as slippery as an eel, he's a regular rascal."

"Pray be careful, Sir John Manford," said Deidamer, "that you do not lay yourself open to an action for slander; I shall be unwilling to take advantage of your unguarded moments, but respect for my character will not suffer me to allow such remarks before a gentleman of Sir John Scarsbrook's station, and the very respectable magistrate."

"Your character!" shouted Thomas Manford, "that's a good one however! Your character indeed! I should like to know what thee art but a swindling scamp."

"Oh, I assure you, Mr. Manford, that a character is quite as needful to me as to a cotton spinner."

This kind of altercation might have extended itself much farther but for the interference of the magistrate; and the prisoner's examination was again adjourned, and after a very civil "good day,"

from the manufacturers, the baronet was left alone with Mr. S——, the minos of the office.

After having made him acquainted with the leading points of the inquiry he was pursuing, leaving the name of his noble friend untouched upon, and laying before him the deposition of the woman, he requested his assistance in the endeavour to bring to light the fate of the child, as well as to test the general accuracy of the charges brought against Deidamer, of cruelty to the unhappy woman.

"I am afraid," answered Mrs. S——, "we shall not make much of him—he is a finished scoundrel, and such men are difficult to deal with. Dr. Mackay's presence will be required, and if you will wait he shall be sent for, and we will proceed at once."

"By all means, I am here purposely, and will wait the doctors's presence."

After some time Mackay arrived, and on being introduced to Scarsbrook, expressed great unwillingness to appear in person against Deidamer.

"We do not ask any thing from you at present, beyond your verification of this man being the person who introduced Agnes Raymond into your asylum, and supported and visited her there."

"I have already informed the noble marquis on that point, and unless formally and legally summoned, to give my testimony on any other topic, I must respectfully, but firmly, decline committing myself."

"Well, doctor, 'sapiens sapit:' we won't press you; if we want your attendance, 'lex habet tentacula,' you know; and so good morning." And the disciple of Galen and Willis withdrew.

"That man may well decline coming forward," said Scarsbrook, "the treatment hinted at, rather than detailed by the person, about whom I am in-

teresting myself, would, if proved, drive him and his assistants from society, branded as the vilest and most wicked of their kind; however, let us investigate the case of the child first—that, if living, may have some of the evils, fortune has inflicted upon it, removed; its mother is dying—we will punish her tormentors, but let the work of mercy be first gone through."

Mons. Deidamer was, therefore, again summoned, and as the examination was strictly private, Mr. S—— desired the baronet to assist, or rather to pursue his own method in the case.

"You are," said he to Deidamer, "the John Edmondson, who some seventeen years ago, had under his protection, a woman, known by the name of Agnes Raymond."

Mons. looked thunderstruck—and after a careful scrutiny of Scarsbrook's person, answered evasively.

"It is in vain to deny it, neither can your denial avail you:—when I inform you that Agnes Raymond no longer resides under the roof of Dr. Mackay, you will at once see I am not making vague guesses."

"Aye, Dr. Mackay," answered Deidamer slowly—as if deliberating on the course of conduct he had best pursue—"I did not expect this, pray excuse me a few seconds, gentlemen, seventeen years is a long date to bring clearly to mind, and your interrogatory points at something beyond that I presume."

"It does, and to be explicit with you, the first and great aim I have in thus questioning you. is to learn the fate of her child."

"Ha! is it so then—she always muttered something about rank and station," Deidamer said to himself, rather than answered Scarsbrook; then addressing him said—"You cannot wonder, Sir

John Scarsbrook, that I am cautious in answering your questions—the escape of this woman, maniac though she be, is a singular circumstance: but as you avouch it, and speak of Mackay, I am willing to believe it is so. Where, and under whose protection is she? that, *I* surely have a claim to know."

"I must decline all explanation with you at present, and I again repeat, that my first and great aim is to learn from you the fate of the child—you could have no reason for its destruction, and it may possibly survive; the whole of her history is fully known to me, and I am determined, that in so far as retributive justice can be a reparation to the sufferer, it shall be had by Agnes Raymond; I do not say this threateningly to you, but simply that you may know, that her interests are confided to one, who has the will, and he hopes the power, to work out an act of justice for her."

"In what capacity do you stand with regard to this Agnes Raymond?" said Deidamer, in a slightly sneering tone, "as a relative or friend, hardly as the father of the lost child, I should suppose?"

"No—I stand here as a magistrate, and as a man to whom villany is abhorrent, and whose power is ever ready to be lent to the oppressed."

"Well, sir—there are many cogent reasons to keep silent: still as I am circumstanced silence would scarcely avail me, and to be frank, as the woman has escaped, and is under proper guardianship, why if the child lives and can be restored to her, it will at least be a comfort to her. Well, then," said he, drawing himself up, "I am the John Edmonson you speak of, and I lived for a time with the woman named Agnes Raymond, then, I hesitate not to say, one of the handsomest of her sex; who she was she carefully concealed; that she was some one degraded infinitely below her proper rank, her person and her manners clearly

showed; but not a hint could I wring from her on this head; her child I had no wish to injure, but the woman grew besotted upon it, and neglected every thing else in attending to it; she was too fine a creature to be lost, and as the only means of winning her to more useful purposes, I certainly had it removed out of her way. I had, however, miscalculated the strength of the woman's attachment to her child,—she became frantic, and I was obliged to place her for safe keeping in the house of Mackay, thinking that a little restraint might restore her faculties; here again I was wrong—she was a woman of strong passions and these overthrew her reason; I might have restored her child to her, but Mackay resisted this, and thus years passed away, in alternate calm and madness. And now for the child—the woman to whose keeping it was intrusted, may be still living—of the child itself, whether it be living or dead I know not, nor have I heard of it for years; indeed I question whether or not I have asked after it, since it was deposited with her, a small sum being paid that she might take it entirely to herself, and bring it up, and call it one of her own."

"Your story is one of cowardly and cruel conduct," said Scarsbrook, "to an unprotected woman. What reparation can you make for a *series* of actions so wantonly ungenerous to this woman and her child, by which the one is now lying on her death-bed, and the other for ever lost, or condemned to a life of obscure misery, dependent on charity for its support."

"None," answered Deidamer, "the evil has been done, and I cannot if I would undo it."

"And who was the woman who consented to be the tool of your tyrannous resolution?"

"I am detained here on a most foolish and frivolous charge, or I would, ill as you think of me,

give you my personal assistance; I will, however, give you the best directions I can;" and he sat down and wrote several names on a slip of paper, and then said—"The parties here mentioned, are those most likely to assist your search. Some of them I have not seen for a long time, others I have lately seen, but as they form part of a particular set, who procure a living by their connexion with certain callings, there will probably be no difficulty in tracing out the woman you want, provided she still lives; if not, I can no further aid you. I suffer under your evil thoughts, Sir John Scarsbrook," he continued, seeing the expression on the baronet's face, "and to some extent, perhaps, justly. I labour in my vocation, however, and am not ashamed of it."

"It may be so—I accept your information as it is given, and should have been glad had any palliating circumstances in your narrative, freed me from the necessity I feel under of investigating, very rigorously, the treatment received by Agnes Raymond. If the present charge be dismissed, I must detain you to answer others."

"I am in your hands, sir, and can only defend myself as I best may."

CHAPTER XX.

"A very excellent piece of villainy."
Tit. Adronicus.

Sir John Scarsbrook lost not a moment in seeking out the party mentioned in Deidamer's note. Only one name had a residence attached to it, and here of course his inquiries commenced. A narrow and dirty street, within St. Giles', the principality of beggars, proved to be the *locum tenens* of the man he wished to see. This part of London is curious for having retained its name and particular character, more tenaciously than any other part of the modern Babylon. From the time of building a shrine to St. Egidius, the patron saint of beggars, to the present, its courts, by-lanes, and back streets have been the chosen haunts of some of the lowest and most profligate of mankind—Scarsbrook, an entire stranger, except by name, to the place, had but a poor idea of Deidamer's agents and confederates on entering the miserable tenement he was in search of. Filthy and dilapidated walls, and unfurnished and squallid apartment, and a coarse Amazonian woman, habited in strict accordance with her dwelling, promised but little information of the kind he wanted.

"Does Edward Littleton live here, my good woman?" was his query.

"Ned Littleton—what Ned the Magger?—If that's the boy you want, then sure he does."

"The same, I dare say—is he within?"

"Would your honour jist tell me what ye'r

wanting with Neddy; he's a broth of a boy to me, and who knows if he would have a liking to see ye?"

"Oh, I am not seeking him to harm him, you may depend upon it. I come with a message from a Mr. Deidamer."

"Oh, the masther—sure Ned will see your honour; so jist step in, out o' the daylight, and I'll see after him."

Scarsbrook did as he was desired, and followed the woman into a narrow and gloomy court, after passing through her house: here he found himself suddenly in the midst of a populous hive, that seemed to be entirely shut out from the rest of the world by lofty buildings. Many a curious and inquiring glance was cast upon him, by the inmates of this den of Cacus—the presence of his guide apparently saving him from other modes of salutation.

A narrow door-way, at the extremity of the court, opened upon a flight of steep and dirty steps, up which Scarsbrook, at the woman's request, followed, not feeling altogether comfortable, in thus burying himself alone in this secluded and dangerous neighbourhood, which he rightly conjectured was the abode of any thing but honest men.

After mounting two landings, the woman stopped on the third, and tapping at a door, said softly—"The masther."

"All right," somebody called from within, and his guide left him standing, in the dark, merely saying, that Ned would be with him in a "twinklin."

When the sound of the receding steps of the woman had fairly died away the door suddenly opened, and a brief and gruff "come in," served for Sir John's introduction, to a tall and powerful

man, little past the prime of life, who looked at him steadily—asking him what he wanted there. Scarsbrook, though offended by the tone and manner of the man, answered by saying, he sought him by the direction of Deidamer, in order to learn something of other parties, whose names he would find in the billet—at the same time placing it before him.

"And who are you?" was the insolent reply,

"That has nothing to do with my visit here answer to the contents of the note, and I will not long trouble you."

The man laughed and said sneeringly—

"Look ye, my man—you are not the first who has come here under Deidamer's directions, and who has stayed much longer than suited his own convenience, so answer my questions civilly."

"I do not understand your menace and despise it, and if you are not disposed to attend to what I ask of you, I must seek my information from Deidamer himself."

"Yes, when you see him again, which will certainly not be to-day, as I shall find you a lodging in 'Darkman's Cove.'"

"What mean you fellow? Dare you commit so gross an outrage upon a free citizen, and in the very heart of London? Let me pass, or I must force my way out."

"Fair words, master, if you please, you are as safe here as if you were in the 'stone jug' itself, perhaps a little safer, as I am both judge, jury, turnkey and executioner; so make yourself easy, till I see Deidamer, and hear what he is after with you."

"Villain, stand back!" exclaimed Scarsbrook, and rushing past him, he endeavoured to open the door. Its fastenings were, however, of too complicated and carefully contrived a character to be

moved by mere strength, and, after several efforts, he turned round, saying—

"Infamous scoundrel, how—"

But he was alone, the man had quitted the room by another opening—had left Scarsbrook to his own meditations.

These were far from being of a satisfactory or pleasant character. He paced the apartment, and examined every point in it minutely; it was small and unfurnished, beyond a single chair and table, without fire-place, and lighted from above by a small sky-light. The two doors, at the opposite extremities of the room, were strong and so fastened that they offered no fulcrum on which to apply his strength, had he been disposed to have wasted it in efforts to effect his liberation. Of this, however, he saw not the slightest chance, and endeavouring to fortify himself, by the best philosophy he possessed, he sat down, and turned over his singular detention in the calmest mood he could command.

What the precise nature of the place was, in which he had thus been entrapped, was a complete mystery to him; why he should have been detained was, he reasoned, explicable perhaps, upon the ground that Deidamer wished the charges against him to be kept quiet, till he had an opportunity of getting out of the way. What chiefly surprised him was, that in the midst of a populous city, he could thus unwarrantably be detained; and that, although the stir and hum of human life were around him, he felt himself so much isolated from his kind, and as completely at the mercy of his captor, as if barred in the lowest vault of the Inquisition.

Scarsbrook's imaginative disposition had here ample materials on which to exercise itself. The idea of his young and lovely wife came foremost

to his mind, and as he contemplated his solitary imprisonment, of the kind and duration of which he was ignorant, the knowledge of what she would suffer drove him to fury. He called aloud, beat at the doors, and stamped on the floor of his cell, with the earnestness and force of desperation; nor did his paroxysm of anguish cease, till the fast darkening room roused his attention to external objects.

He had completely exhausted himself, and as he sat down, and remembered that letters would be waiting him at his hotel, letters which many promises had been extracted from him, that he would answer promptly, he was fairly overcome by tender recollections, and he wept in the deepening twilight, such tears as are shed only by men, when alone and in the extremes of grief.

He was uninterrupted in his sorrow, as he had been unattended to during his violence; night settled around him, and, hour after hour, he traced the gradual subsidence of active life, in the increasing silence, till little was heard, save the call of the watchman, and the chimes of the hours, and finally he sunk into sleep.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Men's judgments are a parcel of their fortunes."
Cleopatra.

Deidamer was a principal director of a well organised band of freebooters, having in its ranks gamblers, and other thieves and villains, to whom a secure and secret hiding place was of the first consequence.

Littleton, the man in whose clutches Sir John Scarsbrook had so suddenly and unexpectedly fallen, acted as confidential agent to the whole set; and the decoy into which the baronet had been trapped, had been more than once found eminently useful in keeping individuals out of the way for a season, whose presence might have been more or less inconvenient to Deidamer or his companions in iniquity.

The danger which had at times beset Deidamer, had, as we have seen, determined him to take advantage of Manford's windfall, to remove himself, and his ill-gotten spoils, into another country; and the knowledge of this attempt having been made was one of his chief difficulties—his confederates holding aloof till a fair division of the spoil should be made. This he was forced to comply with, and the strength of the gang was then exercised to procure his liberation.

In point of fact, there would not have been much trouble in effecting this, in the absence of all evidence of fraud, had it not been for Count Hartmann, whose disclosures threatened some danger. Not

that a man of his dulness had been one of the initiated, or could operate, in any way, in injuring the organization of the set; but his direct assertions, in the present case, was a stumbling block, and when the baronet brought his charge, the danger looked still more formidable; many acts of no mean villany having been perpetrated through the agency of Mackay.

Deidamer at once resolved to put him out of the way for a time, and for this purpose took advantage of his inquiry, and sent him to the haunt of Littleton; well knowing that he would be safe enough there, both against his own efforts at escape and the search of others. This iniquitous proceeding was in itself one attended with many subsequent perils; and when Littleton saw him on the subject, and learned who and what his prisoner was, he urgently dissuaded him from the step; as he felt that the disappearance of a man like Scarsbrook, under the peculiar circumstances of carrying a note from him, in the presence of the magistrate, would be construed most unfavourably. On the contrary, he advised him to give the baronet the information he wanted; as he did not think it likely, that any evil could result from the woman's history, Mackay being a known and tried man.

Deidamer yielded to the opinion of one too useful to be lightly listened to, and it was resolved that the baronet should be set at liberty, with an apology, after a promise had been extracted from him, not to proceed further into the inquiry regarding the woman—on condition that every aid was given to him in searching out the child.

"But," said Littleton, "what can be done in that matter? I recollect the stir made very well indeed; it was after you came out of hiding for Lord Westchester's affair—it seems as if every

thing about that business would be endless, a good part of the proceeds of his lordship's manors are still unsettled—and this woman again—how did Mackay let her slip through his fingers?"

"I don't know—but the chief wonder is, how she fell into the hands of Sir John Scarsbrook, and what possible interest he can have in her, as I should think the child can not belong to him; however, let him out of your den, I thing on the whole his detention would be hazardous, and we may perhaps make something out of the woman—where is Sarah Jones, to whom the child was delivered?"

"I don't know—but I think she is some where about the Cove, I will inquire."—And so the worthies parted. Littleton, on the following morning, as he had not reached home till late, visited the room in which Scarsbrook was confined, and found him just waking from an uneasy slumber.

"How now, fellow!" was the baronet's exclamation, "what new outrage do you come to perpetrate?"

"None, Sir—I come merely to apologise, and to say that you are at liberty, on condition that you pledge yourself, as a man of honour, not to mention your temporary confinement, nor turn it to account against Deidamer."

"Never! my first act shall be to expose a transaction so infamous."

"I would have you think better of it, sir, else we have no choice; our own safety demands this pledge—that given, we will aid you in the search you have commenced, and without our aid it must be useless;—but here again I must bargain with you, to suffer the woman's confinement to tell its own story."

"I again tell you, fellow, I shall enter into no conditions with you; the gross violation of the law

I have suffered, and the obvious shame and success of the whole affair, make it imperatively necessary that I inquire into it. And for Deidamer's conduct to the woman of which you have spoken, know, that that also shall be rigorously scrutinized."

"Then I must tell you, Sir John Scarsbrook, that you are in my safe keeping; I am willing to make a fair bargain—I give you liberty, will aid your researches,—you suffer Deidamer's connexion with the woman to rest upon its own evidence."

"I have no other to proceed upon, therefore it needs no pledge from me.—For my silence it is impossible, the outrage is too gross, the system of which it appears to be a part, too villanous to be overlooked."

"Sir John Scarsbrook, I am willing to treat you civilly; your detention was an error, but for that error we must not suffer; we have no choice; if you promise, as a man of honour, not to bring forward this, as a means of detaining Deidamer—go, you are at liberty to depart; and I again repeat, we are willing to assist you. Our rules are imperative—your refusal will only lead to another and still harsher measure, and this I am willing to spare you."

"I feel myself to be to some extent in your power, and there are many urgent reasons to make me desirous of quitting so detestable a place. How can you, however, expect me to remain silent, under so grave and outrageous an injury; dead as you are to a sense of justice and fair dealing, you must feel that it is impossible."

"It is possible—and what is more, you must do it, therefore say at once, as a man of honour, you will not turn this incident to account against Deidamer, and I will instantly look after your affairs.

You have indeed no choice, and we do much in thus trusting you, but you are known to us, and therefore we offer to you this easy alternative."

"What! the alternative of winking at a place like this, and at persons like yourself."

"For the place and for myself, they are equally beyond the utmost power of your ingenuity to injure—on those heads make yourself easy—it is concerning Deidamer only, I speak, and concerning him only this much, that he does not receive molestation from you, because he has been instrumental in placing you here;—this far you must go, or I leave you till evening, when you will be removed to another place, where I shall have nothing more to do with you—I shall say no more. Answer me yes or no, and the consequences be on your own head—I have no wish to interfere further with you?"

"No! then, and at once—I will never do that which my conscience disapproves, nor will I believe that your villany can extend beyond its present limits; go, therefore, and leave me. The discussion is altogether unprofitable."

Littleton without saying a word disappeared, and with the exception of a plate of provisions, thrust into the room from a concealed opening, the baronet was undisturbed throughout the day, occupied, as it may well be supposed, with fancies and reflections of a painful and uneasy character; his determination remained unshaken, and, as he indignantly contemplated the infraction of the law practised upon him, he vowed eternal dishonour to himself, if he did not persevere till he had completely broken up this gang of villains, whose snares had entangled him.

In this state he remained till late in the evening, and darkness had been some time set in, when Littleton again appeared, bearing a light. Without any

ceremony, he proceeded to bind the baronet's hands; this was, of course, vehemently resisted, but the man was strong enough to have mastered two of Sir John's muscular force; he said not a word to his animated and energetic remonstrances, and having fairly effected his purpose, he bound a thick handkerchief over Scarsbrook's mouth, and then hurried down a different flight of steps to that by which he had entered. At the foot he was joined by another man, and a door being opened, the baronet found himself in the open air; not a moment was allowed him for examination—a coach was waiting, into which he was lifted, and immediately driven away, accompanied by the man who had joined him in the house, Littleton remained behind.

CHAPTER XXII.

Abram—"Was the villainy complete, sir?"
Ned—"Not quite—but nearly."

Old Play.

The coach proceeded at a rapid rate for about half an hour, when it drew up, and Scarsbrook, with as little ceremony as had been shown on introducing him into it, was dragged out; indeed he was treated as if he had been a common felon, the parties appearing to have neither care nor commiseration for him. The vehicle immediately drove off, and his conductor, on knocking twice at a door, in what appeared to be a lofty and dead wall, was admitted with his charge into a vestibule, dimly lighted by a solitary oil lamp suspended from the ceiling.

Scarsbrook, half stifled, struggled in vain to free himself from his unpleasant predicament, whilst the fellow viewed his efforts with a sardonic grin, and an occasional chuckling laugh. After a few minutes waiting, they were joined, to Scarsbrook's great amazement, by Dr. Mackay, who not recognizing him, in the dim light and in his half masked condition, said—

"Well, Harry, what game's a foot now?"

"Don't know, Doctor,—some simpleton regularly limed and twigged in the cove."

"Aye, aye, it's a good while since I got a customer from that quarter. Bring him forwards, and let us see what he is, I am not over fond of the job."

Scarsbrook listened to this brief dialogue with the most marked impatience, and followed Mackay into a large and better lighted apartment. Here the bandage was removed from his face, and his first effort was to address the doctor, and explain to him who he was.

Mackay immediately recognized him, and, ordering the attendant to retire, said—

"I am sorry for this, Sir John Scarsbrook, sorry on many accounts, and I fear prudence will force me to restrain your personal liberty. It is an evil affair—and, now you see in whose power you are, you will be conscious that I had sufficient reasons for being cautious in speaking out before Mr. S—— and yourself the other morning."

"Dr. Mackay, since you are involved in this extraordinary conspiracy, I must, I suppose, appeal to you for aid. I seem at once to have lost all control over my own actions, at a time when I am more than usually desirous to be unconstrained. Since there appears to be no alternative, pray tell me, by what means, I may escape from detention."

Mackay walked backwards and forwards for a short period, as if deliberating some important question in his mind, and said—

"I'll tell you what, Sir John Scarsbrook—I am unwilling to proceed farther in this business, Deidamer's late defalcation, and some other secondary concerns, have made a change of plans necessary, I should think amongst them, and I will wash my hands of them. It's ugly work, and I am willing to secure what I have, without farther risk—I won't keep you here therefore, and without more ado, will release you. It may seem strange perhaps, that such things can be done in the heart of London—but it is only one of the many extraordinary modes, which are pursued for the purpose of safety and plunder. One thing is, I don't wish

to saddle you with conditions, but prudence weighs with me, and I trust some regard will be paid to my conduct upon this occasion. It will subject me to many annoyances, and perhaps to some danger, but the sooner the link is broken, the better—What say you, sir?"

"I shall be grateful, whatever my opinions may be as to the proceedings, I have been made a victim to, your readiness to repair, as far as you can, an act of flagrant wrong, will keep you safe; and this the more especially, if I might believe, that you would no longer lend yourself to practices, full of danger to you, and opposed to every principle of justice, and every feeling of humanity."

"Well, this is a good beginning; allow me to set your arms at liberty—and now you are free to depart, unless you will share my light supper, which may, perhaps, not be unacceptable, if you have been confined twenty-four hours in the cove. Will you honour me?"

"Excuse me—no, I am full of impatience to get to my hotel, where my extraordinary absence must have caused some surprise. Can you provide me with a conveyance?—so far I shall be obliged to you."

"I can, immediately," and he left the room for the purpose.

In a short time Scarsbrook had the satisfaction of finding himself safe at his hotel. It is not easy to describe his sensations, when freed from the thraldom of Littleton. He felt that he had seen a page in human life calculated to make him aware of the blessings of his own condition. It had been like passing through a troubled and fearful dream—so far were the real incidents removed from his ordinary experiences. His eyes filled with moisture, as he opened the letter of his wife, and read the earnest expressions of her attachment, and his

first business was to write a reply, not mentioning, however, the unpleasantness that had befallen him.

Manford, he found, had been twice to see him: the manufacturer, since he began to doubt his own wisdom in the particular transaction, the effects of which had brought him to town, had felt a strong disposition to cultivate the baronet's friendship. The coarse pride which had grown up within him was, to some extent, crushed by his present circumstances. He was away from that field where he ruled as Lord paramount, and was shuffled and jostled and thought nobody, amidst the thousands that thronged the streets of the metropolis. This was a sore grievance to his wife; she had, however, made one notable discovery, which was some amends for the loss of the ten thousand pounds, and the other annoyances to which her neice's marriage was subjecting her. Spite of Sir John Manford's remonstrances, she insisted one morning on accompanying him, when he had an appointment with the London solicitor. She had never seen a London lawyer, she said, and she wanted to see "what sort of chaps they were."

Accordingly Sir John made his appearance in the office, with his bulky and finely dressed wife. The lawyer was courtesy itself, and, greatly to the lady's delight, called her Lady Manford. This surprised her not a little, and she had hardly patience till Sir John's business was settled, so anxious was she to talk it over with him. No sooner were they fairly out of the door, therefore, than she began—

"John, did na thee hear him say Lady Manford? What did he mean does thee think—surely he was na fooling me."

"Lady Manford!—that sounds well, Nancy, but I should think he was only making a bit of fun. He's such a civil chap, one never knows what to

make of him. Nobody else calls thee Lady Manford;—let us ask the landlord of the hotel, he's a very likely fellow to know."

"Well, John, that's a good thought: but does na thee remember, that one of the officer folks once called me Lady Manford, and all the rest of the red coats shouted out, no, no. It's my belief I'm a Lady: its only natural, that if thee has something to thy name, that I should have something to mine."

"It does seem natural to be sure, but I never thought of it before—we'll soon know the right or wrong of it however."

"Why only just to think, that I should ha' missed being called Lady Manford, for such a time. My word—but I'll give it our folks at home, they shall my-lady me, to some purpose when I get back. Only to think of being Lady Manford—and having been called nothing but plain Mrs. Why, John, what fools we must ha' been;—art sure nobody ever called me lady? It sounds so properlike that surely somebody must have had sense enough to have said Lady Manford."

On reaching the hotel, their first inquiry was for the proprietor, and the important query was propounded—"Is my wife a lady?"

"I should presume so, sir; I am sure I know nothing to the contrary," was the civil and somewhat smirking answer.

"Oh, what I mean is, should she be called Lady Manford, because I am Sir John Manford, Knight."

"Why, sir, I believe so; it is customary, I think, to address the wife of a knight, as my lady."

"There John," exclaimed she, "just hear that, and he must know; seeing as how he has so many fine folks stopping at his place. What a shame not to have had one's right name to be sure. Oh, it does make me mad—only to think what fools we

must be. But I'll show them the rights of it:—Lady Manford! Lord, John, it sounds grander far than thy name—Lady Manford!—well that's worth something, however—Lady Manford! Come, Sir John, and let us see how Nelly's getting on, for I should like vastly to get down to Factory Hall. Never heed this swindling, cheating fellow, its all no use—thee has been regularly done, but I'm a lady and so never heed lad. But what a shame!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Res hodie minor est here quam fuit atque eadem cras."
Juvenal.

Count Hartmann during these proceedings had sunk below zero, in the opinions of his once admiring relatives: his conduct was indeed marked by such utter meanness, and his share in the robbery of Sir John Manford, so unblushingly avowed, that his father-in-law threatened first to thrash him, and then to separate him from his daughter; at these intelligible and ominous words the count shrunk in bulk perceptibly, but was somewhat comforted on being assured, that if Mr. Manford should put the former part of his threat into execution, he would have good ground for action of battery against him, by which means he would get damages—and that as to the latter portion of the minatory speech, it was much easier to talk of a divorce, than to procure one.

Fortified by this legal assurance, on the morning after Sir John Scarsbrook returned from durance, he presented himself to the two brother manufacturers, and after his usual prelude of bows and grimaces said—

"Oh, mine dear father-in-law, how do you do this morning, and how is mine wife?—I must have mine wife—and you must get the money from Deidamer of which he has robbed me, like one great

rascal, and then we will all go down to Factory Hall, like one famille. Oh! they were pleasant times we had there, plenty of money, plenty of meat, plenty of drink, and very pleasant times on mine word."

"Humph!" answered Manford, "those times are passed, Mr. Count: and now let us know what you have left of Helen's fortune, you canna' have spent it man, so tell the truth. As to your wife, she wants to ha' nothin' more to do wi' you."

"Oh, but she must: there be laws in England mine dear sir, very good laws, for man and for wife; you did say you would beat me, but there are laws against that too, and if you beat me, you must pay money."

"Pay money for thrashing such a pitiful fellow as you! I wish I had you down at the mill, I'd raddle your bones to some purpose; it would be dear work to pay a farthing a blow upon your lean miserable body. Where's our money, tell us that, or I'll thrash you after all!"

"Ah! mine dear Mrs. Manford," he said, turning to Sir John's lady, who was sitting eating some broiled ham and a buttered roll.

"Don't call me Missis, fellow: I'm not Missis, I'm something better than that, I can tell you—Missis indeed!" and the insulted lady bridled up, and looked "unutterable things."

"I'll tell you what, Count Hartmann, just let me give you a bit of advice: just take yourself out of the way, you and your gang have diddled us out of a fortune, and nearly killed a good girl: so just be gone, and the devil's benison go with you!"—said Sir John Manford, sternly.

"I shall go when I have mine wife—I do want mine wife—I will have the law for you—yes, the law is good for the man and the wife."

"You impudent scoundrel," said Thomas Manford, starting up, and losing all patience, "get about your business, or I'll shake the life out of you, if it costs me a thousand pounds."

He was proceeding to put his threats into execution—and would most probably have given him what her ladyship termed "a good hiding," had not his fury been appeased by the entrance of Sir John Scarsbrook: as it was, he contented himself with very unceremoniously ejecting him, amidst a discordant volley of "diables, sacrés, mon Dieus," and other delectable expressions.

Sir John Manford and his lady hastened to address the baronet, and to explain the unseemly outrage, the lady being particularly voluble on the occasion; Scarsbrook inquired after the countess, and was told she was slowly improving.

"And pray," said Manford, "how is lady Scarsbrook, Sir John? and now it's out—I have been twice to ask you, for I said to my wife, it was uncivil not to ask after her, and you so forgiving."

"She is quite well, I am happy to inform you, and will be pleased that her old friend has inquired after her."

"Well, Sir John," chimed in Lady Manford, "let us forget and forgive; women you see are such queer creatures, and we was all so mad that our John should be so fond of Anne, as we used to call her; she'll make a nice lady, I'm sure, and I dare say you make a capital husband,—does'n't thee think so, John?"

"I hav'n't a doubt of it, Nancy, and I cannot but be ashamed, when I think how I treated the prettiest and best girl I ever saw;—well I should like to see her again, that's certain—I hope you won't bear spite, Sir John."

"Oh, no!" answered the baronet, smiling.

"How are you proceeding with Deidamer!—I have good reason for wishing his punishment."

"Badly, badly, Sir John, a most perfect scoundrel, we are fairly swindled, and I shall give up the task of getting my money back—it's clean gone, every penny of it."

"Then you have abandoned all hope, have you? I am sorry to hear it, as he richly deserves punishment: I understood the count, your relative, could bring home the charges against him."

"No, no—a pair of rascals!—one not a pin better than the other;—as for the count, his evidence only condemns himself—oh, he is a precious rogue, and pretty fools we have made of ourselves.

"That we has, for sure," continued his lady—"but you really don't bear a grudge agan us, Sir John, about your lady?"

"No, indeed, by no means: I assure you I do not."

"Well, now, that's speaking like a gentleman, at any rate, and I'm sure we are obliged to you."

"Is Deidamer still in custody?" asked the baronet, "as I have a serious charge against him."

"Have you? that's capital! if you can catch and hang him, it will be a mercy—has he swindled you?—that would be some comfort, as I shall never hear the last of my slip—but who would have thought it."

"Why, no, not so exactly. But I must see Mr. S——, and ascertain what can be done." And so saying the baronet left them.

The Manfords were not a little pleased by Scarsbrook's civil bearing, his high respectability had made itself apparent since they had seen him in town, and they began to be aware, that although

wealth was a powerful talisman, there were certain personal and social additamenta, not altogether to be despised.

"Thee see's, Nancy, Sir John is a born gentleman, and every body knows it, and that makes people look at him as somebody."

CHAPTER XXIV.

"A cause on foot,
Lives so in hope, as in an early spring
We see the appearing buds."

Shakspeare.

On arriving at the magistrate's office, the baronet requested a private interview with Mr. S——, during which he laid before him an outline of the results which followed upon his application to Deidamer. The magistrate expressed great surprise at the details, and asked what steps he intended to take, urging him to proceed instantly against all the parties, who had shown themselves implicated in so strange and abominable a system.

This the baronet declined, preferring, on consideration, to push his inquiries after the child of his noble friend, rather than at the moment, pursuing the actors in the violence against himself; wisely judging that an insuperable obstacle might be placed in his way by other proceedings.

"Let us," said he, "redress the wrongs of others, and then we will proceed to seek out and to expose the ramifications of a system of violence, so gross and unendurable, as that to which I have been subjected, I shall therefore trouble you to have Deidamer brought in."

The man made his appearance, after short delay, and Scarsbrook said—

"Mons. Deidamer, you are aware of the treat-

ment I have undergone since I last saw you: I am willing for the present at least, to take no notice of it, however deeply I may feel myself to have been injured. And now again for the child of Agnes Raymond: this is my first object: you see I have escaped your toils once, and be assured that, any further attempts to mislead or misdirect me, shall be followed by the heaviest penalty of outraged justice."

"I must again give you the same directions, unless set at liberty, and there is no ground for my detention."

What, fellow! Mr. S- —, "do you suppose Sir John Scarsbrook is s blind as to trust you a second time! rather wonder that our officers are not already in pursuit of your confederates."

"It would be useless, Mr. S——, and if Sir John Scarsbrook intends to follow out his search, this is the only mode; unless, I again repeat, you set me at liberty."

"A very likely story—and where should we find you at this time to-morrow?"

"Here—provided I was allowed to be so—that is perhaps questionable."

"Ha! ha! ha!—I think so Mons., and so, we will keep you, whilst you are in our hands."

"I do not apprehend any further violence," said Sir John, "we will, however, retain you as a hostage for your good faith, Mr. Deidamer; give me your directions again, therefore, and attended by one or two of your officers, Mr. S——, I will revisit the haunt of crime."

"So attended, sir, it will be useless: you will not succeed even in finding the house; go alone, and you may go safely, and I pledge myself you will succeed."

"Be it so,—then give me at once your instructions."

"For God's sake," urged Mr. S——, "don't trust him: remember your late detention, and let us adopt other measures. We will wring it out of him depend on it."

"I will try him once more; a copy of his note shall be deposited with you, so that if you hear nothing from me, in the course of a few hours, you may suppose that I have been entrapped."

"You are right, Sir John," said Deidamer, "Mr. S—— has been so long on the bench, that he has forgotten every feeling but suspicion towards men such as I am,—and it must be confessed," he ended, smiling, "that appearances are, in the present case, in his favour."

Scarsbrook having received a similar billet to the one he had carried before, drove, at once, to the nearest point he could manage to reach, towards the street he was in search of; and after a little trouble he again found the house, and was answered by the same strapping woman he had before seen. She showed no sign of recognition, but, on receiving his message, proceeded through the court,—up stairs—knocked and left him.

Littleton received Sir John Scarsbrook without any mark of surprise, and desiring him to be seated, said he would make the necessary inquiry, and left him. Here he remained, in the place of his former detention, for perhaps half an hour, when Littleton returned, and reported that the woman was at present out of the way, but that he had no doubt she would be forthcoming in a few hours. At his request Sir John left his address, with the promise that she should wait upon him either that day, or on the following morning.

He began, however, to think that the whole pro-

ceeding, on the part of Deidamer, was but a mode of gaining time; and when he reflected amongst whom Agnes Raymond had been placed, vague but unpleasant surmises filled his mind upon the subject. Late in the afternoon, however, the waiter reported that a wretched looking old woman requested to see him: and a miserably squalid and filthy creature, a very Canidia in look, stated on his inquiry, that she was the person to whom the child had been consigned.

Scarsbrook questioned her immediately, ran over his memoranda as to dates, and asked her why or wherefore she should have lent herself to so base a purpose.

"It's long since now, sir. and I should not have remembered it at all, only Littleton put me in mind of it. I don't know any reason, but that I was paid for taking care of it. It was not the first of Deidamer's bantlings that I'd nursed."

"And what became of your charge; is it living or dead?—dead I should fear from what I see of its nurse."

"That I cannot tell you, for I made but little trouble about it as well as the rest. Poor little things," she continued, appearing to be touched by some womanly emotion, "poor little things—children and women were little thought of!"

"Surely you did not abandon it! endeavour to remember clearly—and see, here is money: you seem poor, wretched, little better than an outcast, you shall be amply rewarded."

"Ha, ha, ha," she chuckled, "money; its no use to me now. I've seen the day it would have done me good, but I should be as poor as I am now in an hour—gin, pickpockets, and tobacco would soon empty my purse, I trow.—But as for the child, why

I've never been asked after it, and how should I remember."

"It is the child of Agnes Raymond I inquire after."

"Oh, now I remember; she that went mad and nearly killed herself. It made a great noise at the time just amongst ourselves," said the old woman, as if she were gossipping, "a great noise, I remember it well, for she was a handsome woman; well I took the child to the Foundling Hospital the same day I had it; I could not take care of them poor things, and there they were nursed; it was the best thing that could happen to them."

"Good God!" exclaimed Scarsbrook, "we live indeed in the world, and know nothing of it. And pray does your memory serve you, as to any particular circumstances connected with its reception, that is can you recollect the day, or any thing which took place at that time?"

"Oh, it was just at the time I was about burying my husband I recollect; for he should have had charge of its mother, when he fell into a deep area, coming home drunk; it was a great loss, but I didn't mind then."

"Then you think you could fix nearly upon some day on which you received the child, and afterwards placed it at the hospital?"

"It is a many years since, and I have seen and suffered much, and my memory is not very good: I thought but little of it at that time; I dont think I could remember any particular day."

The baronet's prolonged inquiries could elicit little more than the simple fact, that the child of the Marquis of Swansbeck, supposing the one in question to have been his offspring, had been consigned to the Foundling Hospital. He saw Deidamer, whose answers coincided pretty nearly in

their bearing to those of Agnes Raymond, so called of the old woman, and there did not appear any reason to doubt the general accuracy of the account given; he was able, also, by comparing notes, to come near to the day when the child must have been deposited in the hospital, and there, accordingly, he repaired.

An entry in the book, noticed the reception of a female child, a few weeks old apparently, well dressed, and in good health, just about the period when the one he was seeking after must have been left; no name was attached to it, but from certain marks he traced it forward in the books, till it appeared to have been baptised by the name of Anne, and further on he found that the child had continued very healthy, and had, eventually, been forwarded with a number of others, to John Manford, cotton-spinner.

This raised the anxiety of the baronet to the utmost; the age of Lady Scarsbrook, and her name, roused a host of singular ideas—what if his humble bride should prove the daughter of the marquis—what if the unhappy woman, now beneath his own roof, the victim of treachery and cruelty, should be the mother of his beautiful wife—what if, even now, the daughter were watching in anxious tenderness over her mother;—these and many other associations crowded Sir John's mind, as he continued to make his inquiries, for the purpose of ascertaining whether any mark or other peculiarity had been noticed, or whether any particular article of dress had been preserved.—He found his inquiries much facilitated by having fixed upon one Anne.—His previous visits to the Hospital, when he was forced to seek at random, among a number of Annes, had, as we have already seen, led to no result—now, however, having a clue, there appear-

ed no difficulty; he laboured to satisfy himself that he was not led away by his personal feelings, and repeated scrutinies as to dates satisfied him, that this Anne was the long lost one, whether his own Anne was identical with her, was another, and equally interesting question.

CHAPTER XXV.

"A spot here and there—and now and then a broader mark, shows we are on the right track.

German Story.

On the following morning he received a letter from the marquis, stating that Agnes Raymond was evidently much weaker, and urging him to expedite his return. He again visited Deidamer, and had the old woman brought face to face with him, and again found the same coherence in their several statements.

As he had determined on leaving London in the evening, he paid another visit to the hospital, the chaplain having promised to make more minute inquiries, respecting the child indicated. He told the baronet, that the only peculiarity he could find marked was, that she was in mourning, and had on a necklace, with a small diamond clasp; and this he stated, together with a certificate, had been forwarded with her to the country. There were two or three Annes sent down, but none had more than the Christian name and age attached in the register; neither could any of the nurses at all remember the sirname of Talbot. Most of the children had two names, as they termed them, but, as it has already been remarked, these were given capriciously, either by the nurses, or as accidental circstances might suggest.

Fortified with these important memoranda, Sir John hastened to have an interview with Manford; but found that the party had, shortly before, taken their departure from town, to travel, by easy stages, down to their country residences.

The manufacturers had abandoned all hope of making any thing out of the gang of swindlers; so that with the exception of Scarsbrook's charge, Deidamer was at liberty to go wherever he might choose. The urgency of the motives he had for an instant departure, determined him to postpone, for a time, at all events, his just cause of judicial inquiry. His impatience would not suffer him to wait for the slow process of a legal investigation, and he contented himself with desiring that he might be under observation; this done he entered his travelling chariot, hoping to overtake the Manfords at an early stage.

These were proceeding homeward in no very pleasant temper; the ill health of the countess had made her querulous, the ladies were out of spirits about the loss of their money, while Sir John and Thomas were now quarrelling with each other, and anon abusing Hartmann, who, spite of all opposition, clung to his wife's "famille." His immediate presence made the countess exceedingly miserable: she had taken a perfect loathing towards him, and begged and entreated that he might not accompany them. There however he was, perched upon the box, alternately apostrophising his wife, and addressing "big words" to her connexions It required some soothing to prevent Manford removing him vi et armis, and he swore roundly, that the first out of the way place they arrived at, he would pummel him to within an inch of his life, and there leave him.

He was as good as his word—in a long strip of

unenclosed road beyond Dunstable, he insisted on the post-boy pulling up, and leaping out he dragged Hartmann to the ground, and belaboured him so unmercifully, that the boy remarked—

"Lord, master! you will thrash him an inch past his life, if you go on that killing rate."

Manford, a passionate and obstinate fellow, had had his anger too long fermenting, to be satisfied with any thing less than a complete mummification of the count; Sir John's lady at length grew frightened, the countess fainted, and Sir John himself got out to put an end to the unequal contest, the count indeed being quite hors de combat.

In this state they left him—and Scarsbrook, whose rapid travelling with four horses had speeded him along, arriving at the scene of the outrage, some short time afterwards, was surprised by the sudden stopping of the horses, his postillions remarking that there was a murdered man lying by the road-side.

In this statement they were fortunately not borne out by facts, Hartmann having just recovered sufficient strength to begin to gather himself together; Scarsbrook had him placed in the carriage, and, as soon as he was able, he related the cause of his lamentable condition; luckily no bones were broken, or serious injuries committed.

"Ah," said the poor fellow, gaping like a strangled monkey, "I will have laws for him, one great rascal, carry away mine wife, and leave me killed dead—but I will have the laws."

At the next stage Scarsbrook deposited him, the blows and thumps he had received rendering some medical treatment necessary; and in the course of a few miles he overtook the Manfords, who had got on much more plensantly since they had dropped their noisy companion.

The baronet begged Sir John Manford would take a seat in his chariot to Leicester. To this the manufacturer gladly assented, and, after a few general remarks, he said—

"You may, perhaps, remember, Sir John, that some time ago, I applied to you for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not any thing accompanied the foundling from London, in the shape of dress or ornament."

"Oh, aye, sure enough, but I was near crazed by the women; and so you see I did not give it a thought. It was a foolish business altogether."

"Well, but now I trust you will lend me your aid—as it is of the first consequence to ascertain, if possible, the fact."

"I am sure I don't know; some of the lasses are likeliest to remember; there are a good many of them yet in the mill, some married, some unmarried. I don't remember any thing about Anne in particular—but, perhaps, old Jenny, the woman who had charge of them, may know. I've had none down for some time—indeed, I think, none since the lot amongst which Anne came, so its not unlikely that she may. She's living close to the mill, and I shall gladly help you."

"Thank you, and if you choose, we will push on. Mr. Manford will safely escort your party."

"With all my heart—let us stop and tell them, and then post away; I want to get back sadly."

This being done, and Mrs. Manford having said that they would remain all night at Leicester, Scarsbrook gave his instructions, and a rapid journey brought them, about noon on the following day, to Factory Hall.

Old Mrs. Manford lifted up her hands and her eyes, on seeing the baronet and her John "hand

and glove," as she called it. Many and pressing were her inquiries, but these were answered by Manford's saying—

"Wait awhile, mother—you see Sir John and me have a bit of business to settle, and then I'll tell you the news."

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Dawning of a bright succcss."
Cowley.

Old Jenny was something of a character, and had she lived in earlier times would have been reputed a witch, having one of the most important requisites for that exploded calling—excessive ugliness. Yet the withered crone was not without some touch of true feminine feeling; she had been exceedingly attentive to her young charges, as far as she was allowed to be indeed, and called them her children. Several of the foundlings, which had grown up and remained at the mill, lodged with her and this constituted the principal source of her livelihood.

To Manford's question regarding Anne, his Anne as he called her, she answered—

"Bless her, she was a bonny child, and a sweet tempered one. You see sir," speaking to the baronet, "I was a kind of mother to them, and a pretty large family I had. Well, let me see if I have any thing of hers; I shall soon find it if I have," and she proceeded to open and examine r large oaken linen chest filled with frocks, all much alike, many wofully patched and of a variety of hues.

Besides these, there was a sliding drawer, filled with shreds of paper, proving to be the certificates sent with the children, and various little trinkets which she said she had taken care of, and which had been worn by the foundlings when they first came down from London.

"You see, Master, if I had na put them by, the factory lads would have stol'n 'em for a certainty: or the lasses themselves would have made away wi 'em, in some way or other:—and now I'm sure I don't recollect what your Anne had on."

Whilst the old woman was busy puzzling her brains to conjure up her memory, Scarsbrook was engaged in turning over the little hearts, ear-rings, broaches, necklaces, and other things, composing old Jenny's stock of curiosities; some of which she stated she had restored to their owners, since they had got married. Nothing like the diamond-clasped necklace however appeared, when on mentioning what particular thing he was searching for, she exclaimed:—

"Oh, the mischief—its the very thing my granddaughter's child wears," and going to the door, she screamed to a set of noisy urchins playing like ducks in a pool of mud not far distant, till "little Jin," detached herself from the rest of the group, and came forward, most plentifully begrimed.

"Come here, you dirty little thing, whoever saw such a black-a-moor," and she undid a single-linked necklace, and placed it in Scarsbrook's hand.

"You shanna, granny—you shanna—it's mine, granny!" screamed "little Jenny," whilst he carefully inspected the clasp, which to his infinite joy, proved to have either a diamond or some other precious stone set in it.

A penny, and a promise of a new necklace, satisfied the youngster, and a very liberal present, and an assurance that the trinket should be placed in the hands of the rightful owner, more than satisfied the aged woman, whose shrivelled features and dull but cheerful eye, lightened up, as she expressed a hope, that "her master's Anne would once more come amongst them."

"I always said," she continued, "that the poor

helpless children came from grand people, they were so good-behaved and decent-like, I was sure of it at first, as we'd never seed such children here afore."

The baronet, after thanking Manford heartily, pursued his route to Vale Hall, and soon saw the grey walls of the home of his fathers.

The fervent welcome of Lady Scarsbrook, and of the family generally, was grateful to his feelings; his wife, indeed, drew him aside, and it was long before her pleasurable agitation subsided.—It is delightful thus to be greeted, and to Scarsbrook, at this juncture, it came with ten-fold influence—as he pressed her to his breast, the secret of her birth trembled on his tongue, but prudence checked him, and he resolved to speak to the marquis and marchioness (Agnes Raymond) beforehand.

He had no selfish feeling on the subject of his wife's birth,—this he had most strongly shown, by his union with an unknown and unprotected being, after making every effort to ascertain her origin, and to satisfy himself of her worthiness; but in obedience to certain conventional ideas, natural in themselves, and imperative in his particular case, now, when there appeared a certainty that the cloud which had hitherto obscured her fate would be rolled away—a sense of justice to himself, to his wife, and to the unfortunate woman who had been the victim of harshness and wrong, impelled him to insist on a due recognition of her rights; and in doing this he felt assured that his noble friend would be ready to join him.

The lovely creature now and for years moving beside the marquis as his wife, was herself the impersonification of purity, and he entertained no fears, but that circumstances would develope themselves which would permit her to enjoy that companionship untainted by dishonour or impropriety.

These thoughts passed rapidly through his mind, whilst returning the caresses of Lady Scarsbrook, who all unknowing of them, worshipped him as the sole object of her regards. To her, birth and parentage had ceased to be interesting—she was his, and that satisfied her.

The marquis in the meantime was waiting anxiously to learn the result of his friend's inquiries, and Scarsbrook on joining him in the library said—

"Prepare yourself, my lord, for a denouément, at once singular, painful and gratifying: your child is, I believe, found, and thank God, worthy to inherit your name: but before entering into further particulars, permit me to see Agnes Raymond, or rather, I should say, the Marchioness of Swansbeck."

"Good God, Scarsbrook! and Athalie, what of her?"

"First, Agnes Raymond, my lord, and then you shall have a full exposition of the facts of the case, —all will be well, believe me, and Athalie will receive no injury."

"Not for the world: but pursue your own course, let the suspense be as short as possible: I am, as you may conceive, anxious past endurance, on the subject."

CHAPTER XXVII.

——"What's in a mother
That you start at it."
All's Well that End's Well.

During the brief absence of Sir John Scarsbrook from Vale Hall, the system of Agnes Raymond had been rapidly breaking up: rest, composure and kindness, seemed only to have left her open to the attacks of decay, which had been kept off hitherto, by the excitement of deranged intellect; she had made daily inquiries after him, and a gladsome smile mantled her pale and even ghastly features, as he now approached her.

He held out his hand to her, as she joyfully said—

"I thank God, Sir John Scarsbrook, that I see you once more—I am fast dying, but you have found my child—I see it in your expression; may He ever shower blessings upon you and your lady—she has been as a nurse to me, to me the scorned and degraded."

"Pray compose yourself, I speak to you as the Marchioness of Swansbeck, and ——"

"No—no—no!" she interrupted him, "I am not worthy the title; call me not so—I would not cloud d'Harcourt's present happiness, nor pain his wife—call me Agnes Raymond. But my child—tell me of her."

"I will—and for her sake and my own, I must speak of you as the lawful wife of my noble guest.

Do you recognize this?" and he then placed in her hands the necklace,

She turned it over and over, at the same time appearing to be connecting it with past associations.

"My eyes are dimmed with tears," she said; "I know that my child liveth, this was given her by Edmondson, or Deidamer, and yet how strange does it appear—it brings her before me—and, oh! Sir John, bring her to me; let me clasp her to my heart, and I shall bless God and die. She is here, I am sure—you are too kind, too good, to excite hope only."

"She is, indeed, here—I rejoice to say she is my wife; Lady Scarsbrook is your long-lost child."

She gazed at him for a few seconds with earnest looks, and then burst into a passion of tears, blessing him in the intervals of her vehement sobs. Scarsbrook was not unmoved as he bent over her, and strove to calm her, praying her to be comforted, in order that he might bring in her daughter.

He now rejoined the marquis, and briefly narrated to him the history of his child; the scrupulous care taken as to dates, and their verification —the congruity and coherence of the entire chain of circumstances, removed from his own mind all doubt as to the identity. Swansbeck listened eagerly; and as point after point was cleared, he acknowledged that there could not possibly be any reasonable ground for doubt.

"It is some consolation my friend," said he, grasping Scarsbrook by the hand, "that my child, even under the adverse circumstances of her fate, should have been thought worthy to have become your wife; I should have wished her no happier or better lot, had she been educated under my own eye, and with all the advantages of rank and

wealth. I will see Agnes—will seek her forgiveness—repair her injuries I cannot."

"It is well resolved, my lord, and I thank you for your good opinion—believe me, Anne was not less dear to me in her nameless obscurity than now, as the descendant of a noble family; I rejoice indeed greatly, that Providence has unravelled the mystery of her birth—nothing could make her dearer to me, but there are many social prejudices, which, although I despise myself, Lucy, Haggerton, and the circle in which we move, might find difficult to overlook. I will apprise Anne of her parentage, whilst you seek an interview with Agnes Raymond, for so she persists in being called."

Lady Scarsbrook hastened to her husband, on receiving a message to attend him in her own room. She threw herself into his arms; and, seated on a low sofa, they indulged in that unrestrained freedom of intercourse, the result of perfect love in the married state.

"And now, my love, I have some news for you—happy news, though dashed with sorrow, and tinged with many painful reflections; not on your account, indeed, but on the part of those who will, in future, share your regards."

"What mean you, dear Scarsbrook? Who can share my regards? what news have you for me? I have no wish ungratified—there is none but yourself on earth whom I love. What, then, have you to say, truant," she continued, flinging her arms around his neck, "beyond explaining the cause of your prolonged absence. There you are amenable to me—for are you not mine; I wish to hear nothing more."

Scarsbrook returned her embrace; the poetry, the enthusiasm of love, was still his—and as he gazed upon the beautiful and trusting woman

resting upon his bosom, he felt that her natural dower was her best recommendation to his affections.

"You know, my love, of my vain and futile researches after your birth—researches undertaken full as much on your account, and on that of Lucy, as to satisfy my own anxious wishes. What would you think, sweet, if now I have been successful?"

"I should tremble, dear Scarsbrook, to think so; I should be terrified lest my parentage should be unworthy your wife. Unknown as I have been, I became yours—to what happier lot could I have attained, had I been born in a palace, and educated in splendour. I am yours, dear Scarsbrook, oh! do not let us disturb our felicity by seeking to know farther."

I, dearest, have wished for no more; you are in yourself all and every thing. Still, my love, you merit being placed in your own proper personal rank. I have, I believe, discovered your father!'

"My father! Oh, Scarsbrook, do not say so! to be sure I am there must be some dreadful story to tell of my desertion. Leave me in happy ignorance—you are father, mother, brother, husband; I have never known the names of family connexions—I have none—none, love, but you. Oh, dear Scarsbrook, my heart has no room for any body but you!"

"It is indeed true, my angel, that there is a lamentable history connected with your parents, for your mother still lives: a history, however, which can throw no tarnish upon your fair brow, love. Gladly shall I hide some portion of it from you; but the rest you must know to vindicate the fair fame of your own lineage."

"My mother! Alas, that the knowledge should

come, when the feelings of infancy and youth are passsd away. Once, indeed, I should have blessed the name—once a mother's voice would have been music to my ears—once her tenderness and love would have filled my heart with a daughter's fondness; but ah, my dear Scarsbrook, those times are past: my forlorn infancy and childhood knew no mother, and I have no remembrance, no, not the faintest conception, that motherly care or kindness was ever bestowed upon me. I have grown up alone in the wide world, and now, dear, I am safe with you, why seek to call to mind the evil deeds of others. Oh, if I have a mother and father, may they be such as will not make you ashamed of your wife—for myself I have neither hope nor wish to gratify."

"Your father is noble, my dear Anne, nor is your mother wanting in rank, though now sunk and degraded—so much so, that it would be impossible to recognize the once proud and beautiful woman in her present condition."

"Then you have seen her—seen her to whom I owe my birth; and you tell me kindly and lovingly, dear Scarsbrook,—but I tremble to know more,"

"By a strange but fortunate coincidence of circumstances, my love, both your parents are now under your own roof."

"Gracious Heaven, Scarsbrook! what mean you?"

"That the Marquis of Swansbeck is your father, and that the sick and unhappy person, whom you have so kindly nursed, is your mother!"

Lady Scarsbrook remained silent for a space, gazing with tearful eyes upon her husband, till she burst into tears, and buried her face in his bosom.

"What means this passion of tears, my own love—what is there that can distress you? Much

as I may deplore the unhappy fate of your mother, much as I may blame the conduct of the marquis towards her, you are the heiress of his name. The cause of their separation was ill-judged ambition on the one side, and pride and outraged feeling on the other. The fate of the marchioness—for marchioness she is—has been dreadfully unhappy; but her chief sufferings originated, and have been continued, by her sorrow for your loss. You were deprived of her love by an act of atrocious villainy; and deeply has she suffered for the penance of her affection for you."

"Can it be possible then, dear Scarsbrook," murmured his wife, "that I am the child whom we have so often heard her speak of;—and can it be possible that the distinguised nobleman is the husband of Agnes Raymond, of her whom we have seen, as we have seen her?"

"Such I believe to be the case, my love. Now dry your tears, and listen," and he went briefly over the details which have been already given, occasionally interrupted by the tears and exclamations of Lady Scarsbrook.

"Oh, what a terrible history; let us hasten to compensate by our kindness the sufferings she has gone through:—my poor deserted and bereaved mother!—if I cannot feel for you those emotions natural to the heart of a child nursed in your bosom, I can, at least, pity and cherish you. But," she said, pausing, "Athalie—the marchioness—what of her, dear Scarsbrook, of her, my friend and companion, my kind and affectionate friend—what of that sensitive and high-souled creature."

"Nothing but good I trust, nothing but future happiness; the shock will be dreadful doubtless, but it must be made as gentle as possible."

Whilst Sir John and Lady Scarsbrook had been thus communing, the Marquis of Swansbeck had

visited his long neglected wife; and a scene of self-reproach and mutual forgiveness had taken place, affecting on both sides. The marchioness had wept, and blamed herself for precipitancy, and Swansbeck had commiserated the trials to which she had been subjected through his imperious and selfish proceedings. No bitter words, no wild reproach, escaped the exhausted and woe-worn sufferer. Sorrow had taken away the sting of disappointment, and the recovery of her child so happily circumstanced cast a glow of satisfaction upon her mind, that effaced her troubles, and seemed a recompence for her past miseries.

In this state they were joined by Scarsbrook and his wife. Her ladyship knelt by the bed-side of her mother, and received the passionate blessing of a heart that had long cherished her image. Tears were indeed abundantly shed, but they were the overflowings of joy—till the baronet, fearing that the continuance of so exciting an interview might prove too much for her weakened energies, withdrew both his wife and the marquis from the apartment, and left her to repose.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights
His constant lamp."

Milton.

The delicate and painful task of communicating to Athalie her present position, devolved upon Scarsbrook; her impassioned temperament made him fear the result, but it was absolutely necessary that she should not be left in ignorance; he trusted that her pure and generous mind, would enable her to triumph over her difficulties; he felt very acutely for her;—her bright and sunny brow had no mark of shame upon it—and it was more than probable, that her embarrassment would be of short duration; the finger of death was too visibly impressed upon the marchioness to permit a hope to be entertained of her recovery; and this, although a painful remedy, was some ground of consolation. The life, indeed, of the marchioness, should it be spared, had little prospect of happiness; Swansbeck guardedly but firmly hinting, that his affections were bound up in Athalie, and she, and she only, was the wife of his future existence; Scarsbrook had learnt sufficient to show him also, that there were grounds for a divorce from his first wife, and this was a proceeding fraught with painful reflections to himself.

In this mood he sought Athalie—her exceeding loveliness had never struck him more forcibly, and as she made an allusion to the agitated manner of the marquis, and began a playful raillery against it; his heart smote him, and he felt inclined to permit her unsuspecting attachment to remain unclouded; so powerful was the influence of this feeling, that after a few remarks he left her, determined to consult the Earl of Haggerton before disturbing her happiness.

The whole chain of circumstances, involving so deeply the happiness of those deservedly dear to him, had been unravelled, whilst himself and Lady Haggerton were in the profoundest ignorance of any plot or mystery: he was pleased to find that Lady Scarsbrook was, by birth, well entitled to rank amongst themselves—though his proud mind shrunk back from acknowledging the wretched woman, to whom he had been administering charity, as the Marchioness of Swansbeck.

"Swansbeck's treatment of this woman, whom you have, with some precipitancy I think, recognised as his wife, is, under any circumstance, quite indefensible, and were it not for Lady Scarsbrook's sake, I should be disposed, were I in Swansbeck's place, to sift the whole affair far more closely than you have done: however, I am delighted on your account that 'these things are,' and as you have gone so far, the present marchioness, as marchioness she ought to be called, must be made acquainted with the facts of the case; I do not see any difficulty, nor do I conceive that her present position ought to be disturbed. Her union with our noble friend, was one of love and good faith, and his previous errors cannot at all interfere with her regard for him—it is needful at least that she should know something of her lord's past life, because, of course,

Lady Scarsbrook will assume her place as his daughter."

"The question with me is, whether we can avoid wounding her feelings, by letting her know that a Marchioness of Swansbeck is in existence—it is beyond all doubt that the injured mother of Anne cannot survive many days."

"Yes—Swansbeck had better remove to town—it will be an innocent fraud upon the marchioness to deceive her so far. Let us seek Lucy, she will be filled with wonder, and can, I dare say, assist us."

Lady Haggerton, indeed, was very much surprised, and also warmly congratulated her brother.

"You know John, how firmly I dissuaded you, from uniting yourself to an unknown woman, even though that woman was one like Anne, so worthy in every way of you; much as I have rejoiced at witnessing your felicity, some of my scruples of prejudice, although softened were unsubdued; this discovery of her elevated rank, joined though it be with many painful circumstances, is, nevertheless, a joyful one. You speak of the lovely marchioness—surely there can be no need to sacrifice her comfort, Lady Scarsbrook may be acknowledged, and I am sure the gentle Athalie will only regard her with an increased affection; we will go to her—Anne and myself—and let her know of her new found relative."

To this no opposition was offered by the gentlemen, and after the countess had warmly congratulated her sister-in-law, they joined Athalie in her dressing room. Lady Scarsbrook threw herself upon the neck of her friend, and murmured out that she had found a father.

"My dear love, how you rejoice me! I thought you were all alone in the world—how has your father been discovered?"

"Pray be not disturbed, dear Athalie," said the countess, your friend is the daughter of one dear to you, and your warmth of affection will, I am sure, be increased towards Anne, when you know that she is the daughter of the Marquis of Swansbeck."

"Oh, heavens! can it be—I thank God indeed—long has Swansbeck mourned for a child, and now to have found one so eminently worthy his name—Ah! my sweet Anne, this new tie will bind us still more closely to each other."

Step by step, the whole truth, as to the existence of a former wife of the marquis was known to her, and every thing painful to her own feelings, gently and delicately passed over by her two sincere friends.

"Poor Agnes Raymond! would to God we had known this sooner,—let us hasten to comfort and console her—where is the marquis? I long to tell him I have nothing to forgive, and to see him play the part of a father to our dear Anne,—oh, it will increase our delight a hundred fold," and she kissed her fondly—and the three lovely beings hastened to the chamber of the dying marchioness, and ministered like "gentle spirits" round her bed.

It was clear that her dissolution would soon remove her from the scene which had been one of so much wo and suffering, and it was a grateful task to every one of the distinguished party to attend upon her, and show the sympathy her condition so richly merited, Swansbeck charmed and gratified by the conduct of Athalie, not less than by the forgiveness of the marchioness, found his position far less unhappy, than he had painted it from a distance. The harassing reflections conjured up by the presence of her, whom he had long striven to forget, was more than compensated by

the discovery of his child, a creature of which he had never dreamed.—From the circumstantial details that were communicated to him, from time to time, by the marchioness, and which were amply corroborated from other sources, now the clue was given, he could not entertain a doubt of Lady Scarsbrook's paternity. The Duke of Eversfield, and the Earl of Haggerton had severally pursued the needful inquiries since Scarsbrook's return from London.—Mackay, Deidamer and their confederates had been again confronted, and for the few weeks that the marchioness survived, she was blessed with the unremitting attentions of that child, which she had so long deplored—whilst the foundling, surrounded by all she held dear, found herself not unworthy to share the rank of her husband.

It was a time indeed of mingled joy and humiliation, of chastening and purifying reflection, and generous observances. The marquis could not bid the perished beauty and hopes of Agnes live again, that was impossible, but he could express his contrition and show by his conduct, that he felt how deeply he had wronged her, and by lavishing his regards upon her child make her the inheritor of his departed affections—and these were sufficient atonements. For herself, the natural dignity and nobility of her character, when freed from the trammels which had oppressed it, shone forth with great splendour, and she hailed her approaching end, as it would remove a barrier in the way of the happiness of the marquis. Her attentions to Athalie were of the kindest nature, and next to her own daughter, she evinced the greatest fondness for her attendance; Athalie's warm and generous temper refused to be clouded by the temporary interruption, in the current of her

married life: not one bitter thought passed through her mind, not one single cloud dimmed the lustre of her loveliness as she gazed upon the marquis; he had been the god of her idolatrous regards, and the devotion of the worshipper was unabated, although the shrine of her divinity had other tenants besides herself.—The whole party were delighted by her conduct, and it endeared her still more to those who had long watched her with admiration. Scarsbrook, Haggerton and his Grace of Eversfield, had each their particular train of self-examination, and all felt and acknowledged, that the experiences connected with the foundling and her singular history, would make them wiser and better men.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"The matter of his great offence is dead,
And deeper than oblivion we do bury
Th' incensing relics of it."
All's Well that End's Well.

Whilst these touching events had been enacting amongst the Patricians, at Vale Hall, Factory Hall, and its Plebeian occupants, had also its appropriate "goings on." Sir John Manford had been speedily followed by the whole of the party, and a dreadful clamour arose throughout the neighbourhood, when it became known what kind of a count had come like a wolf in lamb's clothing, amongst them. The countess fortunately showed symptoms of a rapid convalescence, so that there was nothing to interfere with a series of gossiping calls by the ladies; one principal object of these calls being the formal announcement that there was a Lady Manford in existence; and another to tell their own story, their own way—her ladyship remarking—"That one's own tale is always the best; who knows what strange stuff the folks may get into their heads, so we'll just let 'em know all about it."

In pursuance of this very sage resolution, Lady Manford, after having duly schooled and tutored her own people, as to her titular appellation, set out. This affair, indeed, pressed heavily upon her mind,—"Only to think," she communed with herself, and spoke to her household, "only to think that we should have been such fools; and them officers too, as reckoned themselves real gentlefolks, only to

think that they should have been as stupid as other people."

Now, the fact was, that this was one amongst many other practical applications of jokery, which the gallant sons of Mars had amused themselves with playing upon the plebeians.

"Call her lady," said the Hon. Augustus de l' Epée, "call her lady forsooth!—let us not profane the title—they are such dunderheads themselves, and never see any body likely to set them right, that I will bet a cool hundred she lives and dies plain Mrs. Manford, Nancy as I think the people call her, is quite good enough for her, or its diminutive Nance; it will be a good joke," and so it was agreed. The Manfords themselves were so dazzled with Sir John, that their immediate wishes for greatness went no higher; indeed their whole expectations on this head were centered upon him, whom they devoutly believed would sooner or later be either a lord or a "parliament man." Their ignorance was perfectly natural, their connexions never having placed them under circumstances to become acquainted with heraldic distinctions. They never read either, so that "knights and ladies" formed no part of their day-dreams; their John was, indeed, a knight, what could they expect more—and so his poor wife remained plain Mrs. Manford.

The news was not long in spreading abroad, and a universal hubbub was the consequence. Lady Manford was here and there and every where; the whole world, that is, the township in which they lived, was amazed at its own stupidity; and, as if to make some amends, the late Nancy Norton was at once dubbed Mrs. Lady Manford. Habit is an inveterate thing, there is no getting rid of it, and the Mrs. would attach itself.

Amongst other "direlamenta," which occupied

the heads of the manufacturers, was the mode to get without the soi-disant Count Hartmann. This worthy had made his appearance at Factory Hall, a few days after the return of his wife, vowing vengeance against Thomas Manford, and raising a huge outcry about the punishment he had received, and the detention of his countess. Every door was hermetically sealed against him; the hearts of the people, which had a few months previously warmed at his approach, were now steeled, and the man wandered about like a perturbed spirit, haunting the environs of Factory Hall, but unable to make a lodgment. The countess steadily refused to see him, the remembrance of the treatment she had received being far too deep to be easily or quickly removed; the man had not, during their union, displayed any qualities calculated to engage a woman's affections; and the regard in which she had held him, before their marriage, had long since disappeared.

There appeared, therefore, no hope for him; and certain very intelligible hints were conveyed to him, that a continued residence in that neighbourhood would be likely to prove disagreeable. The manufacturers were little potentates in their way, and having the entire population under their control, there could be no difficulty in subjecting him to a series of persecutions, troublesome if not dangerous. The count, finding how matters stood, shifted his quarters to London, resolving to "have the law" against his wife's friends.

Whilst this turmoil was proceeding, Lady Scarsbrook, accompanied by her husband, paid a visit to Factory Hall, her ladyship feeling anxious to see Manford once more. She did not forget, that his kindness to her, in early life, was the cause of her present happy and elevated position; and this remembrance, fraught as it was with so

many delightful associations, softened down if it did not remove every sentiment of dislike, which might have been generated by his injustice and harshness towards her.

"I should never have kown you, Scarsbrook," —she was in the habit of saying, "should never have been deemed worthy even a glance from your eye, or the slightest regard from La y Haggerton, had it not been for the unbounded kindness of Sir John Manford. I should have lived obscurely, like the rest of the unhappy children, and should have snnk down into the crowd of workpeople which surrounded his manufactury. Think, my dear Scarsbrook, therefore, how much I owe to him. I, in the midst of rank and affluence, your chosen companion, instead of labouring for my bread in the humble guise of a weaver or a spinner. I forgive him for the wrongs he did me, and I should rejoice to hear his homely greeting."

As the marchioness continued to linger on in a state between life and death, the baronet yielded a willing assent to her ladyship's wishes; and one day they were driven over to the new Factory Hall. The ill fate of the splendid marriage of their own connexion, and other circumstances, had completely opened the hearts of the manufacturers; their "golden bridge" had broken down, and their feelings of disappointment and vexation were soothed by the visit.

Old Mrs. Manford, whose original vulgarity had not had the benefit of a visit to London, was sadly at a loss for her "manners," as she expressed herself. She was entirely wanting in the ease and forgetfulness of high life; and the same feeling pervaded more or less the entire family of Sir John Manford. No slight bustle was caused, therefore, by the arrival of the visiters, as the fe-

male Manfords were conscious that the treatment of the foundling had been rude and severe.

"Only to think," remarked Lady Manford, as they held a sort of family council, before appearing, "of having put her i' th' mill, her, as they say, turns out to be some great man's child, and has now I don't know how many carriages; I am quite ashamed—I wonder whether she will say any thing about it."

"Lord," answered Miss Phœbe, how very curious it is, as one should care about Anne; her as we used to scold and knock about like a bit of rag; I'm sure I shan't know what to say to her."

"Nor I," said another, "let's send for Sir John: may be he'll manage to get us through."

This was accordingly done, and as the mill was close at hand, Manford was speedily seen in rapid movement, half covered with cotton "fuz," progressing towards the Hall. The ladies were shocked at the idea of a knight appearing in so filthy a condition, and waylaid him, in order that he might put off his mill dress, and put on one more consonant to the rank of his guests.

"Let me alone," was his gracious answer, "let me alone; you made me make a fool of myself once about Anne, and now I'll just do as I like, I'm sure her heart will warm towards me, for it was just the way I used to sit and chat with her: get out of my way—and when you've put on your fal-lals, come in;" so saying, the knight hurried into the grand drawing-room, and, forgetting decorum and dignity, exclaimed—

"Adad, Anne, I'm glad to see thee," following it up by a hearty shake of the hand, and ending with a kiss.

Scarsbrook was both amused and affected by the manufacturer's warm and unceremonious welcome; and her ladyship was so far moved by the

sight of her old and long tried friend and protector, that tears filled her eyes, as she returned his salute, and expressed her unfeigned pleasure.

"'Well, Sir John Scarsbrook," said Manford, "I am just as well pleased to see your lady, as if I'd got my money back, and charmingly she does look to be sure; I always said she was a lady, and it does me good to find her fixed where she ought to be. Od rabbit it! had our poor Nelly been as lucky! but what's the use of bothering oneself."

"Anne will, I am sure, be delighted by renewing her friendly intercourse with you, Sir John—she feels that she owes much to you, and will not be slow in showing her gratitude."

"Not a bit, I was the gainer, was I not, Anne? why, I was never so happy as when I spent my time in your cottage. It was a foolish business, that of leaving you—but I was led away by our women; but never mind, it's lucky it ended as it did, but I am desperately ashamed of myself—but you forgive me, don't you?"

"I do indeed, most sincerely," was the answer of Lady Scarsbrook.

"I suppose, too," he continued, smiling, "I must call you Lady Scarsbrook: these changes of names puzzle a plain man sadly. Do you know, Sir John, I am sometimes thinking that plain John Manford, is a better title than Sir John, after all the stir we've made about it."

At this juncture the ladies entered—old Mrs. Manford was garrulous in her praise of Lady Anne, and civilities were poured upon her by all the party in the most lavish manner. Her ladyship inquired after the countess, expressing her anxiety to know whether she was better.

"Why, yes, Lady Anne, we thanks you, but poor girl, she's been sadly used—only to think of

her fortune being lost and our John cheated into the bargain—but we've quite done with foreigners, your ladyship may depend on that."

"Yes, that we have," echoed Lady Manford, "quite done with them,—we hope your ladyship will honour us with a call, now and then, we shall all be highly delighted to see your ladyship."

"Lord-sake," whispered Phœbe, "only just hear how very grandly Nancy does talk."

"Certainly—certainly," answered Lady Scarsbrook.

"Say no more about it, Nancy," said Sir John Manford, "we've made it all up, and now see if you can find something for them to eat—I am vastly pleased, Anne—I beg pardon—Lady Anne—rabbit it, I must practice that, and pray how is your father, the Marquis of Swansbeck? Who would have thought, that I should have had a child of a nobleman for my pet—well, I should not wonder if many of the foundlings, came from noblemen, they were fine children, and I used to be sorry to have to punish them—it was a monstrous shame to be sure but what could we do—they must work."

"That system is I trust ended, or at least soon will be. The noble marquis and myself feel great interest for an establishment, which with all its faults has been the means of preserving his child to us—nor less so towards you, and I am commissioned, to return his lordship's thanks, to you, and to beg your acceptance of the inclosed."

Manford opened a packet handed to him by the baronet, and found it to contain a cheque for a considerable sum as a small acknowledgment for his kindness to the foundling.

"I won't touch a half-penny of it, Sir John, not a single half-penny. To see Anne as she is, is enough for me—but I'll tell you what we'll do—

we'll build a school and a row of cottages, for the use of the foundlings, many of whom are still about, and we'll put old Jenny in too, and we'll call it 'Anne's Building.'"

"An excellent idea—and if you persist in your refusal, the money could not be more worthily disposed of,—I shall be most happy to extend your plan, and Lady Scarsbrook will, I am sure, lend herself willingly to it."

"Oh, delightedly; any thing that it is in our power to do, to mitigate the forlorn condition of the bereaved children, shall be instantly and most cheerfully done."

"Well, I'm glad of it. It will do me good to look at it. We'll have it handsome and snug—and we'll set about it directly."

"But," said the knight's wife, "would your ladyship like to have it called Anne's building! Wouldn't it be best to christen it Swansbeck Terrace; that's a far grander name."

"What nonsense, Nancy," exclaimed Manford, "Swansbeck Terrace—a fiddlestick—it shall be Anne's Building, and nothing else.—What does thee think her ladyship has any pride of that sort —I'm sure she has na.—Have you my lady?"

"Not the slightest sir,—and may I ask another favour of you? Allow me to purchase the cottage you so generously called mine: and there I will place poor Nelly Tims. She was kind to me in my extreme need; and the poor creature shows a strong dislike to residing away from her usual companions."

"Buy it Anne—nay if thee'l have it—"

"Oh, John, fie-for-shame; just to hear thee to be sure—theeing and Anneing the noble lady."

"Od-rabbit it mother, it comes out quite natural; —I wish your ladyship would just put me right—hold up your finger or make some sign or other,

that I'm not speaking proper—it's very unseemly."

"Never mind, Sir," said her ladyship, laughing, "for I must really tell you, I should much more readily call you Mr. Manford as in other times."

"Well, that's remarkable, Lady Anne," rejoined Lady Manford, "and do you know as how they've been cheating me for so many months, and calling me plain Mrs. Manford, because every body said it was quite natural. Oh, if those officer fellows ever come into these parts again, they shall catch it to a pretty tune. It's all owing to them—and it was them as brought that count here, who, it's my firm belief, is no more of a count than I am:—and now he's sending law to us, to make us let him have back his poor wife, after so shamefully misusing her. But he shall never have her back, if it costs a thousand pounds."

"I am truly sorry that you have been so unfortunate," answered Lady Scarsbrook.

"It's all our own fault," said the knight, "clean and entirely our own fault. We must have been dazed, I'm thinking. Well, it was the women's doing—and it's some comfort that Anne's marriage was suited to her deservings. Adad, it warms one's heart to see you looking so comfortable and so happy. I always knowd you would be a capital wife."

"Because thee had her under thy care, Johnny," said his mother, "a pretty teacher indeed for Lady Anne. But howsomever it's a comfort, and I hopes her ladyship winna forget to call; we shall always be proud to see her—and she's too good-natured to mind by gones. I'm sure I've na morsel of spite against her."

After some further conversation, Sir John Scarsbrook and his lady departed, pleased with their visit, and thinking better of the manufacturers than

recent events had allowed them to do—and the Manfords on their side were vastly delighted.

"Well," said Lady Mrs. Manford, "what it is to be born a lady. Anne just talks and looks as if she'd been brought up amongst great folks—it seems quite natural to her. It's mighty curious, when one thinks what she's gone through."

Manford found in this visit, too, some amends for his recent vexations. His late experiences had removed a part of the noxious growth of pride and intemperance which had sprung up in his mind; and as these went, the remembrance of Anne came like soothing balm. He had become exceedingly anxious to resume his friendly associations with her, but her rank and station would probably have prevented this, had it not been for the occurrence of the discovery of her birth, in which he considered himself fortunate in having been able to assist, however secondarily. He looked back with remorse upon his unjust and cruel abandonment of her, and secretly resolved to bestow some portion of his great and rapidly accumulating wealth upon her—thus realizing, after all, the fears of his female relatives. This purpose he had the prudence to confine to himself, and was contented with lauding his pet foundling to the skies; and setting instantly and earnestly to work, in devising plans for the building of the Asylum he had projected; in this he was warmly seconded by the baronet, who agreed to draw out the plans, and to finish it on a scale and in a style to make it a worthy memento of the recovery of his lady's birthright. The marquis also took great interest in the scheme, and he visited Manford and his establishment, and inquired minutely into the past history of his daughter. There was much in this to gratify him—much in the noble and pure character of his child to con-

sole him for his dereliction of duty; and he blessed God that he had found one worthy to continue his race.

Considering all the circumstances of the case, this was indeed wonderful. Step by step as he traced back her career, at every one he found her exposed to the imminent peril of being lost to herself and society, and his heart smote him sorely, when he contemplated what a long train of miseries had followed upon his injustice.

CHAPTER XXX.

"There is a history in all men's lives.
* * * * * *
The which, a man observing, may prophesy
With a near aim, of the main chance of things."
Shakspeare.

The Marchioness of Swansbeck, fully acknowledged as such, lingered on for a few weeks, and then died peacefully and tranquilly. The remnant of a noble house—a house which had numbered amongst its possessors many powerful chiefs, in a country long torn by intestine troubles, "by foreign levy," and by outrages against all social and political rights. The Raymonds had indeed exercised kingly p wer, and as the marquis gazed on the emaciated and withered corpse of his wife, re lections of a painful and oppressive nature weighed upon his mind. His memory reverted to his early acquaintance with her, when endowed with charms and graces of distinguished excellence—when beauty, youth, and passionate love, h ıd been her. portion, and when his heart had bowed down before their talismanic influence; and now how changed! It seemed like the retrospection of a vision, so remote was the reality from his reminiscences. The proud and beautiful woman, whom he had wooed and won, and who

had, in vindication of her own dignity, spurned him from her presence, had sunk into premature death, the victim of cruelty and wrong—of barbarities so gross and dreadful, that the mind revolted from their contemplation—of sufferings so oppressive, that it appeared scarcely probable the human frame could endure them.

Many and bitter were the thoughts called into play, by the death-bed of Agnes Raymond, and the marquis, chastened and subdued by them, turned towards the delicate and beautiful Athalie, and Lady Scarsbrook, in the first burst of his melancholy tenderness, and vowed that the ruined hopes and blighted existence of his first wife, should be an enduring lesson to his haughty and obstinate temper.

His affections seemed to expand under the influence of his manly and decent sorrow, and Lady Scarsbrook soon began to appreciate his love. At first, the feelings of friendship, with which she had been in the habit of viewing him, had prevented her turning towards him as a father. He had not come to fill up any chasm in her affections, and had, therefore, to win his way to her confidence and regard. Neither were the circumstances under which he appeared well calculated to call into play any filial regard.

The story of her mother, and the presence of that mother, as an abandoned outcast, all the sorrowful associations, linked with her faded appearance, had chilled and retarded the development of feelings of attachment and reverence. These feelings are natural to the human heart, when its first aspirations are directed by parental tenderness; but not otherwise; there can be no spontaneous display of them in after life, when this first nurture has been lost; and this the more especially

when it happens, as in the case of Lady Scarsbrook, that the whole affections have been engrossed by another party.

The conduct of the marquis, however, was of so generous and manly a character, when he had become fully convinced of the identity between the Agnes Raymond of the past and the present, and was so nobly and so delicately seconded by Athalic, that they secured the sympathies of all around them; and Lady Scarsbrook gradually grew conscious of the claims of a father. In the gloom which followed the decease of her mother, she ministered so gently to him, that he, on his part, soon loved her as a child, and bestowed upon her the fatherly fondness which had never hitherto found an object on which to exercise itself.

Many new ties and new relations were thus established, and the harassing memories connected with the late catastrophe, were abundantly modified by them. The removal of the marchioness could hardly be esteemed a subject, in itself, of regret. Her broken and debilitated system, physical as well as intellectual, forbade any hope of perfect restoration; this she herself felt, and had often expressed her satisfaction, that she should soon be removed. Every thing that tenderness could do to sooth her few remaining steps to the grave was done, and this duty paid, all were satisfied.

Scarsbrook and his lovely wife, accompanied by the marquis and his bride, as the marriage ceremony had been again performed between them after a brief interval of separation, and the Earl and Countess of Haggerton, quitted Vale Hall for Ireland, to spend some time at a seat of the marquis'; where the new found daughter and father, and their connections, might amalgamate into

one general family, and forget, or remember only to bless, the strange history, which had marked their several careers.

Lady Scarsbrook assumed her place in society with the same gentle ease and gracefulness that had won the regards of the noble party at Vale Hall, to love and admire the foundling; and the marchioness again lavished unchecked, upon her lord, all those delicés d'amour, that had long bound him closely to her. Not a shade of suspicion rested upon her spirit—not a murmur of reproach was ever spoken by her—her generous and impassioned character made her strive, with double earnestness, to show her unbounded attachment, and the marquis loved her the more tenderly that he felt and appreciated her motives.

Our plebeian acquaintances were meanwhile suffering the martyrdom of a suit in the Ecclesiastical Courts. The count was urgent for a restitution of marital rights; and as no evidence of cruelty could be adduced to the full satisfaction of the learned gentlemen presiding, it appeared tolerably certain that he would be successful. This was a source of high delight to the count, who declared, on his honour, that England was the only place for good laws.

"I shall get mine wife, and one grand sum of money," said he, "and then I will have the law against mine father-in-law, for beating me. Oh, I shall get great sums of monies!"

The manufacturers were, indeed, fairly brought to bay, and after much scheming and many grievous twinges of conscience, consented to pay the count a farther sum to be rid of his importunities. The dislike of his wife continued unabated—her womanly pride had been so grossly outraged, and the pride of her friends so severely humbled by

the unlucky count, that there appeared not the slightest chance of a reconciliation.

"It's a monstrons hard thing," said Mr. Thomas Manford, "that we canna get without this fellow; I wonder where the deuce he springs from, and what he is!"

These, however, were two points buried in the profoundest mystery; the count, it is to be presumed, had had an origin at some time and in some place, but these he kept a secret—neither could they learn any particulars of his life, beyond the bare fact, that he was a fellow who came from nobody knew whence, and lived nobody knew how. This was cold comfort; they had duped themselves, and they saw no mode of extrication.

Their agent in town sought for Deidamer, in in the forlorn hope that something might be elicited from him, but the worthy disciple of St. Nicholas had vanished. His clique had cut him dead—his breach of their laws had completely separated him from them; it was an unpardonable offence, and the penalty was utter and total exclusion. The laws of the Medes and Persians were far more changeable than those of the set to which he had belonged, and monsieur was left stranded and alone, in the highway of life. Luckily for himself he had taken care of his ill-gotten gains, and knowing well what he had incurred, he received the blow calmly and boldly, and was at once lost to public view. It seemed, indeed, that he had vanished bodidly, for not the slightest trace could be found of his whereabout.

In this dilemma the manufacturers hesitated whether they should abandon the countess to the tender mercies of her husband, or consent to receive the scape-grace back. The former alterna-

tive their good feelings at once repudiated, but what to do with him was a difficult question. He was insensible to shame and disgrace—nothing indeed touched him; and having got upon the necks of the rich plebeians, like the Old Man in the Arabian Nights' Tales, he seemed determined to ride his supporters to death. Nothing that their brains could devise, was bad enough for him; but the count minded not evil words, they were as idle winds—and he swore that he would have his wife.

At this juncture, the long lost Count Jules Jamblichus, suddenly made his appearance, as if he had dropped from the clouds; his original introducer strove to keep him out of the way, but Jules, as it has already been seen, was an unmanageable being, and treating the remonstrances of his former companion and friend, with the most sovereign contempt, he made his appearance at the door of Thomas Manford. A spectre would have been as welcome certainly, and the most cutting neglect met him. No longer did he find a perpetual banquet awaiting him—no longer was he hailed with the warm grasp of friendly hands—nay, tormented as he had been with the count, he bluntly told him, that if he dared to show his face within his walls again, he would have him taken up as a common vagabond.

This was a change Jules by no means approved of—he had little reason to be grateful to the count, and as he found every body loudly reviling him, and perceived that his influence was gone, he turned round likewise, and joined the corps of railers—a fortunate idea for himself, but a bad one for the count. When Manford found that Jules was in earnest, and that his disclosures promised some tangibility, he viewed him much more kindly—the fellow appeared miserably poor, and the ma-

nufacturer relieved his wants, on condition that he aided him in removing his once very dear friend.

The count saw this coalition, with considerable dismay—and after several vain attempts to effect a reconciliation, he suddenly decamped, and left the field open to Jules. Whether the confederate spoke the truth regarding the count, we have no means of ascertaining—and as he had been particeps criminis—his account might be either fact or fiction. It however operated beneficially for the manufacturers, and relieved them, for a time, from his hateful presence. The history given by Jules, was a curious one; and served to strengthen the belief, entertained of the count's baseness, and of their own absurd folly.

After these "sayings and doings," the patricians and plebeians—came more frequently into contact, and a better spirit began to be infused into the latter. The wealth which had been poured upon them, found other employment, than in building fine houses—and eating—and drinking—and coarse merry making. The ladies amongst them slowly made advances in refinement, and the gentlemen abandoned the ale-house for more fitting society. The patricians, on the other hand, were pleased to observe that amidst much which was coarse and gross, the elements of purer and more generous character were slowly developing themselves. The Manfords kept foremost in the race of wealth, as well as of improvement, Sir John having, as he declared, "drunk away his nonsense," and such appeared to be the case with many of his cotemporaries. Their licence and debauchery, seem to have been the natural consequence of rapid accumulation of money, unaccompanied by mental culture and social elevation—they formed a little republic of their own, shut out for a time

from their more wealthy and respectable neighbours, and separated from the rank from which they had risen, by the simple barrier of master and man, unrelieved by any of the ornaments bestowed on that barrier by birth or long established respectability. They thus aped the style of building and dress of the higher class, and retained the personal habits of the lower, and this accounts for many of the anomalies which marked the early career of the wealthy plebeians—

"Time is the nurse and breeder of all good,"

however, and from them have descended many estimable members of society, who are destined to take high rank in a country now become eminently a manufacturing one.

THE END.